



# Crystal Clear-Fall Edition

Official Newsletter of the  
Crystal Springs Council

## *6th Annual Christmas Wine and Cheese Social !*

**Who?** Council personally puts on a wine and cheese each year and we invite ALL the Village Residents.

**When?** Saturday December 9th from 3:00 till 5ish-ish

**What?** A Wine and Cheese to say thank you from your council, meet your neighbours and celebrate the season

**Where?** “Eagles Peak”- 196 Crystal Springs (Ian and Nicole)



You do not bring anything or RSVP, simply show up and enjoy sharing the joy of Christmas with our neighbours and friends.

## *2nd annual Light up the Park and Santa's Visit!*



Come on down to the Crystal Springs Day Park (by the mailboxes) for a “Light up the Park” celebration on **November 18 at 5:00pm.**

We'll be serving up chilli and a bun, chips, hot chocolate and coffee! (You're welcome to bring alcoholic drinks to the park.)

*Santa will arrive with some goodies in his sack and at 5:30 he'll flip the switch.*

If you are available and able to help string up lights that afternoon from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm - we'd love your help! Contact Dave Siever at **780-977-3283** or drop by 192 to let us know if you can help out.

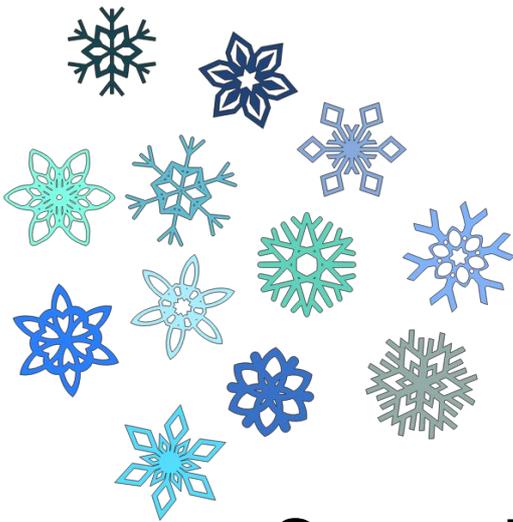
# Dealing with Raccoons

As a result of warmer weather racoons are moving North, with several of them spotted in Crystal Springs. **These are destructive, dangerous animals and their presence needs to be taken very seriously.**

Our community is particularly vulnerable with many feeders, nearby forest, wood piles and other nesting locations. Trapping companies are not local and therefore very expensive. Our most important defense then, is prevention - although traps are available for rent from the County of Wetaskiwin.

To learn more about racoon behaviour and what homeowners should do, please read this short yet comprehensive article at this link:

[www.alberta.ca/raccoons?utm\\_source=redirector#jumplinks-0](http://www.alberta.ca/raccoons?utm_source=redirector#jumplinks-0)



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## Snow Removal

The village will be doing its own snow removal again this year. If any issues arise please call the village office and talk to Amanda.

Public works will **NOT** be available to do private driveways but several companies around the lake will offer this service if you desire.



# Land Use Bylaw will bring change.

## Be informed and have your say

### November 2nd, 10 am on Zoom (link will be on website)

After hundreds of hours of research, study, debate and community consultation, the new Land Use Bylaw received "1<sup>st</sup> reading on Sept 14<sup>th</sup>. The next step is a public hearing planned for 10 a.m. on November 2<sup>nd</sup> on Zoom leading to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.

The new by-law's have some important changes regarding runoff control, site coverage use of municipal right-of-ways, side yards, trailers, enforcement and penalties. For a complete copy of the draft bylaws click here.

<https://crystalsprings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Draft-SV-of-Crystal-Springs-Land-Use-Bylaw-15-August-2022.pdf>



## WATER LEVEL FACTS

Persistent rumours that water poured out of Pigeon Lake over the Weir all summer are false. We started the summer at 849.85m above sea level and then rose above 849.95m through the Spring rains of June 16th to July 1st. The Weir logs are placed at the 849.95m level and it is at this time that water rushed over the dam.

Crystal Springs Councillors have been advocating raising of the logs in order to try and maintain the 849.95 level throughout the summer. While most Councillors from other Villages agree with that position, a few are concerned that in doing so, a storm comparable to 1990 that raised water over 12 inches between July 1<sup>st</sup> and July 7<sup>th</sup>, would place properties at risk. They also note that downstream farmers and ranchers facing drought conditions are pressing to lower the Weir, not raise it.

To look at recent history, Our July 1st water levels at 849.85m were below 2020 levels at 850.46m, below 2021 levels at 850.16m, below 2022m levels at 849.90m, and even below the 50 year average of 849.96m, yet we drained water off. Admittedly the main source of water loss is evaporation and we had a hot summer with levels dropping to 849.71 by Sept 16<sup>th</sup>.

Crystal Springs Councillors continue to advocate raising of the Weir in order to try and keep levels at the 849.85 range for as much of the summer as possible. They argue that a storm surge like 1990 could not be managed by the Weir whatever its level, and allowing water to drop below recreational value would likely contribute little to local agriculture. The solution is in a good snowpack, Spring rains and retaining what water in the ways we can control.

For graphs of monthly levels over the past year and mean levels over the previous years, go to:

[https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/real\\_time\\_e.html?stn=05FA013](https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/real_time_e.html?stn=05FA013)

# Summer beautification

Crystal Springs seem to be getting more attractive every year and this summer was no exception. Many flower gardens across the community were worthy of tours. To see an outstanding example, take a look at the Moerth garden.

Truly a garden of beauty, and only one of so many throughout the community.



## Halloween safety!

Over the past several years, the Oct 31st weather has been relatively warm and Crystal Springs is welcoming a growing number of “trick or treaters.” Whether you are sending your child out or receiving others at your door, there are ways to help keep them safe. For a list of 10 Halloween safety tips click on this link. [https://www.operationwarm.org/newsroom/blog.html/article/2022/10/27/10-halloween-safety-tips-to-protect-your-kids?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI8cycqOG1gQMVGhOtBh37MgnYEAAYASAAEgJLBPD\\_BwE](https://www.operationwarm.org/newsroom/blog.html/article/2022/10/27/10-halloween-safety-tips-to-protect-your-kids?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI8cycqOG1gQMVGhOtBh37MgnYEAAYASAAEgJLBPD_BwE)

A good way to celebrate a Summer Village Halloween is to visit C&C Kozak Haunted Barn at 2- 464018 RR #12 A in Grandview. There is a concession on site and cash donations are encouraged, with proceeds to the Lakedell School.





# Bits and Pieces

## Franchise Fee protection

Residents will find a very small charge on their utility bills, representing Apex Utilities “claw back” of a small “linear” municipal tax. What you won’t find is a “Franchise fee.” The Municipal Government Act allows municipalities to recoup admin and other costs by charging the Utility a franchise fee of up to 35% of the cost of gas distribution and 20% of the distribution cost for electricity. The City of Wetaskiwin for example has a 33% fee for gas and 13.8% for power, thereby giving them \$1.5 million on their gas account and \$1.3 million on power. The Utility pays the city, but then bills back residents for those amounts. Municipalities must decide on the percentage annually and Council did so in September. The Crystal Springs franchise fee? Zero %; because it really is just a “hidden tax.”

## Winter Pavilion use

Are you aware that residents can rent the Day Park Pavilion for private functions? Equipped with window curtains to block the wind, powerful overhead heaters, lights and cooking facilities, the building can serve as a great meeting spot for a celebration or following a recreational activity. A municipal policy also makes it legal to consume alcohol in that park without a permit. For the usage policy, cost and application form, click on this link.

<https://crystalsprings.ca/Policies/#t>

## Boat Mooring and Storage

Since 2021 when the Alberta Government introduced new mooring requirements, Crystal Springs has developed several educational pieces to guide resident compliance with the new laws. Anyone that does not have lakefront property must have municipal approval for their mooring and storage location. Stored items must have the owners name and lot number on equipment. (Previous years approvals by the Federal or Provincial governments are no longer valid.) We have now consolidated the rules from all levels of government, outlining every dimension of the provincial and municipal requirements. It can be found in the policy section of our website or at this link.

<https://crystalsprings.ca/Policies/>

## Are leaves bad for the lake?

You bet they are! While potentially great for plant life, you don’t want them in your lake. Research on decaying leaves in water showed a definite acceleration of “eutrophication” and the growth of algae. Leaves blown into the water and flowing through runoff produce a significant phosphorus content, pointing to the importance of proper leaf pick-up and control.

In a few previous years, Council arranged a “clear bag” leaf pick up, however since the arranging of access to the County Transfer Station residents are asked to manage their own disposition. It isn’t cheap, but costs can be reduced by partnering with a neighbour. The slogan for our doggy excrement initiative works equally well here, “Pick Up Please!”

# Creative minds needed!

We have had a shortage of volunteers on our Recreation Committee since Covid. Prior to that time groups of ten or more planned a number of activities from Pancake breakfasts to Golf tournaments to a Boat Poker Rally. Some ideas that have come forth include:

- Revive the Boat Poker rally
- Revive Golf Tournament and BBQ
- Beer garden in the park with local brewery sponsor
- Summer bi-weekly Friday evening pot luck in the Pavilion
- Family picnic and dance with live band
- Fishing derby
- and many others

Interested in helping? Contact Mayor Ian Rawlinson at [ian.rawlinson@wolfcreek.ab.ca](mailto:ian.rawlinson@wolfcreek.ab.ca) and he can connect you with Nancy and Dave Siever on the rec committee.



## Winter Security

Alberta RCMP report that October and November are the beginning of break and enters to Alberta summer cabins and recreational homes with May having the second highest month for break and enters.

The police suggest a few things you can do to help protect your property:

- Trim shrubs and trees to create clear sight lines
- Install timers on interior lights
- Bring home or arrange off-site storage for expensive tools and toys
- Remove all alcohol and drugs
- Post signage stating that alcohol and valuables have been removed
- Install motion sensor lights outside
- Put away items like ladders that can be used for access

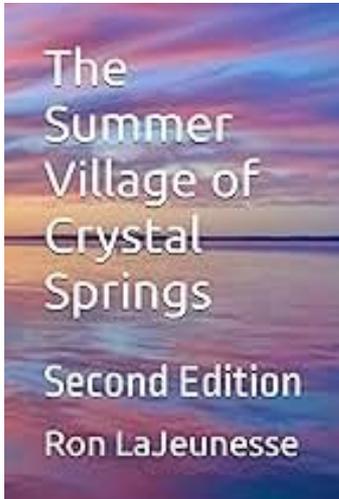
If feasible install a security system as they can provide almost immediate reports of a problem.

At a minimum, it is a good idea to have someone check the property periodically. Residents are also reminded to report any illegal activity to police, even if you are skeptical that they can do anything. Ma-Me-O Beach for example had a rash of home invasions and resident threats and when their Council attempted to increase the local police presence, they were told police stats did not see the area as having a problem.

<https://bc-cb.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodId=2080&languageId=1&contentId=25746>

# Are you prepared for a wildfire?

Following a summer of unprecedented wildfires and evacuations, it is important that we all give some thought to fire prevention and our response to a local fire. We have provided advice in a previous communication, removed some dangerous trees in the tree buffer to our south and Council now has a plan to work with other Villages, Emergency Management and Alberta Firesmart to see if we can get an Alberta or Canada FIRESMART “community grant” to mitigate the risk in that tree buffer zone. For more information on what you can do to prepare now, go to [alberta.ca/wildfire-preparedness](http://alberta.ca/wildfire-preparedness)



## Crystal Springs History

Several years ago Deputy- Mayor LaJeunesse wrote a booklet on the history of Pigeon Lake and Crystal Springs and new residents received a complimentary copy in their “Welcome Packages.” Ron has recently updated and published the booklet as the *Summer Village of Crystal Springs – Second Edition*. The lake and region have a very colourful history and the book makes a great gift or “Coffee table” item. It is available from Amazon for \$8:80 with Ron receiving no royalties.

[https://www.amazon.ca/Books-Ron-Lajeunesse/s?rh=n%3A916520%2Cp\\_27%3ARon+Lajeunesse](https://www.amazon.ca/Books-Ron-Lajeunesse/s?rh=n%3A916520%2Cp_27%3ARon+Lajeunesse)

## Can we reduce blue green algae?

Residents at lakes across Alberta are expressing increasing concern regarding the early production of algae in recreational lakes. Many remedies are proposed from fresh water intake at Gull Lake to treating Moose Lake with aluminum sulfate at a cost of \$15 million. Just prior to Christmas 6 years ago, Councillors spotted a provincial granting program and after a hurried process picked up \$200,000 to research water quality and levels, along with the treatment of Blue-Green algae. For the last several years the Crystal Springs Buoy has been generating data used by the U of A, Alberta Environment and others this and other international data has been used to prepare a report regarding low water levels and algae production, expected this Fall. For more information on this and other approaches click below.

<https://www.plwa.ca/faqs/what-in-lake-approaches-are-being-considered-to-address-water-quality>

# Phoning police at the wrong number!

Following a number of complaints that people couldn't reach RCMP, an analysis of calls found that residents were phoning the administrative offices, rather than **911** or **the 24 hour complaints line**. The RCMP and members of a committee of Councillors from the South Pigeon Villages have a plan to correct that. If you contact police and are unhappy with the response, please advise Deputy - Mayor LaJeunesse.

In an effort to ensure people use the right numbers when contacting police, the RCMP have requested a change to the Google posting and will review their website posting for consistency with clarity in the Edmonton Police Service presentation.

Crystal Springs recently provided a listing of numbers and suggested they be saved. Perhaps they might be attached to the back of a cupboard. It is repeated here for convenience.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- **Police/fire/ambulance** emergency 9.1.1
- **Police** - RCMP non emergency/complaint 780-312-7267 –
- **RCMP** - Admin 780-312-7200
- **Health link** - 811
- **Natural gas** - Apex Utilities
  - Emergency 1-866-222-2068
  - Distribution 1-866 -222-2067
- **Electricity** – Fortis – problems & emergency 310-9473
- **Wastewater system** –
  - Repair - 780-586-2494
  - Emergency - 780-360-4664
- **SVCS Office** 780-246-2494
- **SVCS By-law officer** - 780-719-6447

### Mayor

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