SWIFT CURRENT CREEK
*Watershed Stewards*

# Lac Pelletier Fact Sheet

The Swift Current Creek Watershed is an area of land that drains water into Swift Current Creek, beginning in the Cypress Hills and emptying into the South Saskatchewan River. Within the entire watershed, which covers 3936 km$^2$, Lac Pelletier is the only naturally formed lake!

## Keeping it natural: Tips for Lakeside Living

1. **Join or support local stewardship initiatives.** Prairie Water Care has started the second year of their program in which volunteers monitor water quality of the lake, the health of shoreline vegetation, the "bug" population of the lake, and participate in water conservation activities. This group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month and residents are welcome to join in the sampling. Last year, Community Health instructed and supported volunteers to sample drinking water from 15 community wells located around the lake. Volunteers will be repeating this service in July under the direction of Community Health. If you are interested in having the drinking water from your community well (serving 2 or more families) tested, or would like to review any of the sampling results, please contact Joan Williamson at 627-3442. And finally, landscaping the site is all that is left to complete the RM of Lac Pelletier lagoon which has been built for, and is already receiving the effluent, of lake residents.

2. **Naturalize the shoreline by maintaining or planting buffer strips.** A buffer strip is simply a variety of plants, shrubs and trees, preferably native or existing vegetation, that are planted beside the shoreline. Buffer strips provide many benefits; they minimize unwanted sediment and nutrient runoff into the lake, their roots bind the soil and prevent erosion, and they provide habitat for wildlife and fish.

3. **Decrease the paved area in your yard.** Pavement stops water from percolating into the soil and increases runoff into the lake. This runoff may be polluted with sediment, nutrients, pesticides, pathogens (bacteria and viruses), salts, oil, grease, toxic chemicals and heavy metals. To prevent polluted runoff from entering the lake, plant grasses and natural groundcover, or use gravel and rock rather than pavement.

4. **Landscape using native plant materials.** Native plants are well-adapted to the prairie landscape and reduce the need to water and fertilize. Added nutrients from fertilizers and over-watering increases runoff into the lake. This nutrient-rich runoff results in excessive plant and algal growth, reducing water quality and recreational value.

5. **Choose cleaning products carefully and properly dispose of hazardous chemicals.** Making the choice to purchase low or no phosphate detergents, soaps and shampoos as well as disposing of chemicals (eg. paint, oil, cleaning supplies and toxic chemicals) at designated recycling depots limits unnecessary nutrients, toxic chemicals and heavy metals leaching into the lake.

6. **Maintain your septic system.** Malfunctioning septic systems are the primary source of pathogens (bacteria and viruses) into the soil, and consequesntly, into the lake from runoff. Have your tank pumped when floating solids and sludge fill about 30% of the tank. You may also want to avoid flushing products that may clog your system such as hair, paper towels, coffee grounds, fats, grease and cigarette butts.

7. **Practice Water Conservation.** The less water that your effluent holding tank has to contain, the lower the cost and inconvenience of pumping out the tank.

8. **Practice consientious boating behaviour.** Maintain your boat motor and refuel carefully to limit oil and gasoline from polluting the water. Also, choose to purchase non toxic, biodegradable cleaners and no phosphate detergents for cleaning your boat, skis and wakeboards.

## Who are the watershed stewards?

The Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards are a not-for-profit group that promote awareness of water-related issues for the Swift Current Creek Watershed. For more information, please contact Cher King, Watershed Coordinator at 778-5007.

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*Box 1088 • Swift Current, SK • S9H 3X3*
*Phone (306)778-5007 • Fax (306)778-5020*
*Email: sccws@canada.com or Web Site: http://www.t2.net/sccws*