

SAPRAE CREEK NEWS



February 2021

Councillor Sheila Lalonde's Update



As I'm writing this, we are having a little bit of a normal winter day with flurries and temperatures around -13°. It's looking like the cooler weather will be arriving soon though, so I am thankful everyday that this winter has been just a little milder so I can get out walking with Appleton. I'm sure most of Sapræe Creek has seen us...lol. We're the ones with me standing and Miss Appleton on her back on the road, in the ditch or wherever we are. I sure hope that her antics brighten your day as you laugh at us as you drive by!

Some recreation news. The ice rink in Sapræe Creek doesn't look as if it will be opening this year with all the Covid-19 restrictions. Vista Ridge is open and looking to be very busy. I'm glad that people are out enjoying our beautiful facility and the fresh air. Lion's Park skating trail is open again this year and the lights are still making it a very pretty place to skate in the evenings. MacDonald Island has put in some outdoor activities as well. The skating rink under the canopy at Shell Place is open and there is a new skating trail at the Miskinaw Golf Club. Both are open from 8 am until 10 pm daily. Second cup coffee is also open and there are skate rentals and sharpening available as well. From the information I received, it sounded like the skate rentals and coffee shop were by the Miskinaw skating trail. The crew at MacDonald Island are also putting in groomed walking trails and from what I heard, cross country ski trails as well.

The Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee is looking for volunteers with knowledge and experience for the following positions: Affordable Housing; Arts, Culture and Recreation; and Education. If anyone is interested in applying, please visit rmwb.ca/boards for more information. Applications will be accepted until February 5, 2021.

We have only had one Council Meeting so far, and our next one at the time of writing is January 26, 2021. I have to have my newsletter submission in on the 22nd of each month, but there are a couple of upcoming highlights that I would like to mention. The RMWB received an award for the "I See You; Sawubona" project that was on display at MacDonald Island last February. It received 2 nominations from Fort McMurray and one from Edmonton. Wood Buffalo Housing, McMurray Métis and Wood Buffalo Wellness are teaming up to provide support/ transitional housing to some of our homeless population. This is great news as they are providing a hand-up, not a hand-out.

We had a meeting with the new director of the Oil Sands Community Alliance, Perry Berkenpas, who gave us an update on industry, the oil sands and pipelines. There was also a meeting scheduled with the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, Tracy Allard, but that was cancelled. We are scheduled to meet with the interim Minister of Municipal Affairs, Rick McIver, on February 1, 2021. I also have an Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, Infrastructure and Energy meeting on the February 5, 2021, and a District 4 meeting with the Rural Municipalities Association on February 12, 2021. The RMWB is a member of both municipal associations as we are a specialized municipality.

Things are getting busy again and as far as I'm concerned, that is good news!

I have heard that the newly drafted Land Use Bylaws will be coming before Council soon. Please everyone, have a look and if there is something in them that needs clarification or just doesn't make sense, let me know so that I can raise these questions in the Council Meetings before they become law. It's easier to amend the bylaws before they are passed rather than trying to amend them after the fact.

That's all for now. Stay safe and take care of each other!

Sheila



The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo continues to monitor the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and follow the direction of Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

For regular updates, please visit [Alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19).

For municipal information related to COVID-19, visit rmwb.ca/COVID19.



FACE COVERING BYLAW

RMWB Council passed the Face Covering Bylaw. This means face coverings are now required on all public transit in the region. For indoor public spaces, face coverings are mandatory if there are 50 or more active cases of COVID-19 in the region. To learn more about the Face Covering Bylaw, visit www.rmwb.ca/facecovering.

Rural Water and Sewer Service Updates

Municipal water and sewer service connections are now available through the Rural Water and Sewer Service Program for many homes in the following communities:

- Sapræ Creek Estates
- Conklin
- Janvier

Lot owners are responsible for connecting to municipal water and sewer lines. You could be eligible for municipal funding to support the cost, if you act within five years of when connections are available.

1. Go to our website: rmwb.ca/rwss

- Review the Homeowner's information package

2. Start the application process:

Download and complete these Forms*:

- Application Form
- Funding Agreement
- Assignment of Payment Form
- Worksheet for the Preparation of Quotation

3. Email the completed application and forms to rwss.applications@rmwb.ca

4. Pay the application fee:

Go to: pay.rmwb.ca/RuralWater

5. Hire a Certified Contractor**

to do the work

6. Pay connection fee: Paid in lump sum, or in installments.

For details on any of these steps or about the timing of connections for other communities, please visit our website: rmwb.ca/rwss

For help completing forms, call PULSE at 780-743-7000 or 1-800-973-9663 or email pulse@rmwb.ca

*Forms are at our website rmwb.ca/rwss.

**From the Alberta Municipal Affairs' Private Sewage System Installer Certification List

Engineering/Construction Updates

Saprae Creek – Contract 1:

No water, sewer or road work has occurred in the community since H. Wilson demobilized in November. Work will re-start in May/June to complete the top lift paving and other various grading and landscaping work.

Saprae Creek – Contract 3:

The new sewage lift station at the Saprae Creek Estates Firehall property is complete and the contractor (Chandos) is currently completing minor deficiency items to obtain Total Performance. There should be no impact to residents as a result of this project. The contractor is projecting completion of all work in February.

L Robert Industrial Park Lift Station, Forcemain and A Frame Roadway

The design is currently being completed for all three schedules of work. Construction is anticipated to start in June/July and will be completed in the fall of 2022.

Check the mail! – 2021 Property Assessments are on the way

Make sure to check the mail for your 2021 property assessment notice.

- If you have questions or concerns about your assessment, please visit our frequently asked questions at rmwb.ca/assessments or speak to an assessor by emailing pulse@rmwb.ca or calling Pulse at 780-743-7000 or toll-free 1-800-973-9663.

Why is this important?

The assessed value of your property will be used to establish the amount of property tax billed. Any error on your Property Assessment Notice could impact that amount.

- Your assessment reflects an estimated market value of your property as of July 1, 2020, including any physical changes up to December 31, 2020.

Tax rates are not disputable, so it is important to ensure that your assessed value is accurate before the 4:30 p.m. deadline on **April 12, 2021.**



Indigenous Learning Series Update

We've made an important update to the online Indigenous Learning Series. Residents who take and complete the modules may now request a certificate of completion by email. This free learning series provides an important opportunity to learn and to reflect on ways people can personally contribute to advancing Reconciliation. To learn more and to take the courses, visit our website at www.rmwb.ca/trc.



Bylaw Services: Driveway snow removal reminder

Snow removal is an inevitable part of winter in our region, the proper cleaning and clearing of snow ensures public safety on roadways, sidewalks and driveways. Collaborative efforts from government and residents make proper snow removal possible.

For residents, Roads and Transportation Bylaw No. 02/079 governs snow removal in our region; this ensures safety precautions are met as well as consistency of efforts. Bylaw Services reminds residents of some important sections of the bylaw in regards to snow removal of driveways;

- Residents are responsible for snow and ice removal on their driveways and the sidewalks abutting their homes (Section 13.26 & 13.27).
- Residents are not permitted to place snow and/ or ice from private property onto the highways or other public places of the Municipality (Section 13.30), **this includes ditches** (Alberta Traffic Safety Act, "highway" definition).
- Snow and ice are to be removed within 48 hours of the time when it was formed or deposited (Section 13.26 & 13.27).

Bylaw Services thanks residents for their compliance as this ensures a safe Wood Buffalo. For any questions regarding snow removal, contact Pulse at 780-743-7000





Travelling to Fort McMurray this winter?

Watch out for on-street parking restrictions!

Winter Maintenance Zones season begins Oct. 15! This means there may be on-street parking restrictions in effect while snow is being removed from residential streets in Fort McMurray.

Make sure to follow posted signage and electronic signage in the neighbourhood you park your vehicle. On street parking restrictions occur on weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. if winter maintenance is needed.

Help us clear a path through winter and plan ahead for on-street parking restrictions at rmwb.ca/snowplow.

How do Winter Maintenance Zones work?

Every neighbourhood has been divided into five Winter Maintenance Zones, one for each weekday. Each Winter Maintenance Zone is further broken down into four subzones 1, 2, 3 and 4. On the day that each Zone is active, some of the Subzones within the larger active Zone will be serviced and others will be relaxed. Residents will be able to park in relaxed Subzones without being ticketed or towed. Relaxed Subzones will be communicated on neighbourhood electronic signage, WMZ email Alerts, social media and rmwb.ca.

Residents can find the neighbourhood Zones and Subzones on street signage and online at rmwb.ca/snowplow.

If you have any questions about Winter Maintenance Zones, connect with Pulse at 780-743-7000, toll-free at 1-800-973-9663 or online at rmwb.ca/pulse.



User rates for some municipal services changing in the new year

Certain rates for landfill services and utilities, such as water and wastewater have been updated. The new rates take effect Jan.1, with the updated rates for utilities beginning Feb. 1. All other user fees, rates and charges for municipal services are staying the same.

The updated rates are between 7% to 15% higher than the current rates, with the changes varying depending on the size of the property's water meter and between rural, urban and commercial services. A complete list of all the user rates for municipal services is available at rmwb.ca/userfees.

Why are rates changing?

At the Dec. 8 Council meeting, Council approved an updated Fees, Rates and Charges Bylaw, which included updates to rates for utilities and solid waste services. This is only the third adjustment to utility rates in the past 11 years.

The current rates are below the operational cost to provide these services, with a subsidy from the municipal tax base supporting part of the costs. The adjustments maintain rates below provincial averages, while helping reduce the subsidy.

Annual rate adjustments are needed to help ensure the sustainability of municipal services and avoid a large one-time rate hike. These changes are aligned with Council's commitment to establish a direct cost recovery model for utilities, which is common practice amongst municipalities.

To learn more about user fees, rates and charges, visit rmwb.ca/userfees



What will Wood Buffalo look like in 20 years?

This is the question we're trying to answer in our new **Municipal Development Plan** or MDP.

The MDP reflects current social, cultural, and economic conditions in the region to help provide a community vision that works for all residents.

The MDP Progress

In the MDP Phase 1 engagement, We received your valued feedback to craft the primary vision and strategic directions for the future of RMWB.

As promised, we are coming back to residents for the MDP Phase 2 engagement.

Participate

We need your feedback to confirm the vision statement, the directions, and the focus of the MDP to shape the RMWB region.

Help shape our region by participating in virtual open houses and our online survey during the month of February.

You can participate in virtual open houses on Wednesday, February 10 at 6 p.m. and Thursday, February 18 at 6 p.m. Please note the Feb. 18 MDP presentation will focus on the impact on rural communities.

You are also invited to participate in an online survey. The survey will be available online throughout the February 2021. For more information on the virtual open houses and survey participation details, please visit rmwb.ca/mdp.

EMS Dispatch changes – An open letter from the Regional Fire Chief

To all residents of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo:

As of January 19, 2021, a critical part of our local Emergency Service delivery will experience a fundamental change. Beginning today, if you need an ambulance, your call will be transferred out of our region to one of the three provincial dispatch centres (Peace River, Edmonton, Calgary.) Alberta Health Services has removed our ability to dispatch our own ambulances locally, and they will begin to dispatch our ambulances as part of their consolidation plan. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo will no longer dictate the movement and response of our staff or ambulances.



The Regional Emergency Services Team is doing everything we can in this transition to continue our focus on positive patient outcomes and the safety of our ambulance staff. We continue our commitment to residents, to provide a high-level of care and professionalism and speedy response from the time we receive the information.

We are interested in hearing about our patients' experiences under the AHS consolidated dispatch model. If you feel the Emergency Medical (Ambulance) Service you were provided did not meet your needs, I want to hear about it. I would also be interested to receive feedback on your experience with the provincial dispatch centre. Alberta Health Services has not given us any assurances that they will listen to our concerns, but we will continue to share these with them, whether they are meaningfully heard, or not.

As a resident of this Municipality you deserve a responsive and accountable EMS system that will meet the challenges across our region. Please share your experiences with me by contacting FireChief@rmwb.ca or Pulse at 780-743-7000 as we are monitoring the transition very closely.

Please continue to trust that the Regional Emergency Services team is doing everything we can to make the best out of a difficult situation. We have a proud history of resilience and solidarity when faced with situations we have limited, or no control over. I am confident that we can affect positive change in the interest in public safety, together.

Regards,
Jody Butz
Regional Fire Chief



We received these submissions so far!

The Creek Chronicles
Saprae Star
Saprae Creek Connection

We will continue to take submissions until March 31st, 2021
This is a contest for all residents to participate in.

Submit your suggestions to
Joanne.clark@rmwb.ca or Koralee.samaroden@rmwb.ca



Do you like to take pictures? Do you like to draw?
We are looking for pictures and/or images of Saprae Creek to
use in the Community Newsletter

Submit your digital pictures or artwork to
joanne.clark@rmwb.ca

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES & EVENTS



Project Partners



The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.



Northeastern Alberta
Aboriginal Business Association



EMPLOYERS INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE!

To participate please visit www.choosewoodbuffalo.ca & click “Complete Survey”.

All employers in the region are requested to complete the Labour Study Employer Survey. The labour study survey encompasses the entire Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo region, including Indigenous communities. The study will assist individuals, companies, and institutions in making decisions surrounding future training requirements, future hiring demands resulting from changes in the market, labour trends, and attraction and retention practices. The Labour Study is anticipated to be completed in March 2021 and will be made available as a public good.

The project is being conducted by Applications Management Consulting Ltd. in partnership with Willow Springs. Responses are confidential and results will be compiled in group form by. This survey can be completed over the phone by calling 780-425-6741 or online at www.choosewoodbuffalo.ca.

To request a paper copy or for technical questions, contact Gurpreet Sidhu at 780-425-6741 or gurpreet.appl@mac.com. Please direct any other questions related to the project to Lisa Sweet, Director of Business & Investment Attraction, Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development & Tourism at 780-793-1063 or lisa@choosewoodbuffalo.ca.

WHO WE ARE:

The McMurray Sno-Drifters is a non-profit organization that was formed in the early 1980's. As a club, we provide a safe winter recreational sport for individuals and families within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. In partnership with local Search & Rescue, we also help our members to be informed about regulations and safe sledding practices.

**OUR TRAIL SYSTEM:**

Through the efforts of volunteers and sponsors, we provide Fort McMurray and surrounding communities with approximately 300kms of award-winning trails. Our trails are located in the following areas: **Thickwood trail** is on tower road in timberlea, **Anzac trail** can be accessed through our garage on highway 881 or Anzac and **Stony Mountain trail** is located approximately 30km south of town at the stony mountain staging area.

MEMBERSHIPS:

Cost: \$90.00

To ride our trails, an ASA Membership trail pass is required. Memberships are readily available at the following locations:

4G Motorsports

NAPA

Bumper to Bumper

Syncrude Club 63 Social Club.

Trail passes are from the Alberta Snowmobiling Association (ASA) and are recognized on all ASA trails across Alberta.

What does the pass get me?

As a pass holder, you are now apart of the Sno-Drifters Snowmobile Club. You now have access to approx. 300km of a well-maintained groomed trail system (thickwood/saprae/anzac/stony mountain) along with over 5000km of groomed trail in Alberta.

How do I benefit?

We are a community! We have volunteers that love to spend their time outdoors and helping us out. Our volunteers-built 8 fire pit shacks along our trail system and continually stock wood for other members enjoyment throughout the season.

McMurray Sno-Drifters Snowmobile Association

mcmurray.snodrifters@hotmail.com

780-792-7603

www.snodrifters.ca

VULNERABLE PERSONS REGISTRY (VPR)

The VPR is a free, voluntary and confidential service that helps improve the safety of residents living at home who may be at greater risk during an emergency.

The program provides key information to local emergency responders to efficiently identify and assist vulnerable individuals during an emergency.

The VPR is available to residents in the region who:

- Experience severe difficulty with mobility, vision or hearing
- Have developmental/intellectual, cognitive or mental health challenges
- Require electricity for life-sustaining equipment such as life support, oxygen, dialysis etc.



To register, go to rmwb.ca/VPR or call Pulse.

For any questions, please contact Pulse!



Residents in rural communities can contact the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 24/7 by contacting Pulse via the following:

- 780-743-7000
- 1-800-973-9663 (toll-free)
- www.rmwb.ca/pulse



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

PULSE (MUNICIPAL SWITCH BOARD)	1-800-973-9663 780-743-7000	PULSE@RMWB.CA	RMWB.CA/PULSE
COMMUNITY CONTACTS:		SOCIAL MEDIA:	
RCMP	780-788-4000	 @WOODBUFFALORURALCOMMUNITYCONNECTION  @RMWOODBUFFALO  @RMWOODBUFFALO	
FISH & WILDLIFE	780-743-7200		
HEALTH LINK	811		
ALL EMERGENCIES	911		

To submit information to the newsletter please email:
koralee.samaroden@rmwb.ca

Deadline for March newsletter submissions:
 February 22, 2021

FEBRUARY 2021

COMMUNITY EVENTS & PROGRAMS CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 	13
14 	15 Family Day	16	17	18	19 	20
21	22 Newsletters submissions due	23	24	25	26 	27
28						