

beautiful...but beware!

Written by Jacquie Moore

There's a yellow-flowered plant being seen more around the Lakeland these days: Common Tansy is, unfortunately, becoming more common. The plant is on the government regulated Invasive Species list, and is getting more of a foothold in this area. Now it can be found in many of the ditches ... as well as in people's yards.

This concerns Ellen Misfeldt, who grew up coming to the Lakeland. As a Lab Demonstrator for the Agronomy Department at the University of Saskatchewan, Ellen teaches Weed Identification and Ecology. "There are some people that have it in their yards up here," she says. "It's the same thing in the city, people grow it in their yards because it grows



Photo courtesy of Ellen Misfeldt

well and they think it's a pretty flower - and it is a pretty flower! The fact is, a lot of our common weeds came in because they're attractive - like Creeping Bellflower, Purple Loosestrife, things like that. But the issue is that some of the ones people grow up here out-compete our native flora," says Ellen. "So that's why they become invasive; they'll out-compete the stuff that grows native here, and we don't want our native species to get choked out by plants that were introduced."

The Common Tansy has many branches per plant, with numerous small, compact, button-like yellow flowers. Plants can grow to 1.5 metres tall. According to a Government of Saskatchewan fact-sheet: "Dense common tansy populations may negatively impact water flow, native vegetation, wildlife habitat and species diversity."

Ellen says Common Tansy grows very quickly. "It's a perennial so it comes back every year," she explains. "And it produces a ton of seeds, which is common for most weed species - that's why they're weeds; they produce a lot of seeds!" Those seeds can be spread by vehicles, animals, birds, quads, hikers. Ellen says she's also seen Common Tansy growing near the lakes. "You don't want it close to the water because water and wind are going to help spread seed around."

To remove the plant, the recommendation is to first cut the tops off and put them in a garbage bag to ensure no seeds escape or survive. Then the roots must be dug out.

Ellen also points out that the wildflower seed mixes that are so popular can further add to our invasive plant species problem. "Especially those mixes that aren't tailored to our location," she explains, "like if you just buy the McKenzie brand or the big bulk bags from Canadian Tire, sometimes you get invasive species in there. So I always encourage people to check what is included in that wildflower mix before buying them."

For further information on Saskatchewan's Invasive Plant list, check out the informative and colourful guide at www.beefresearch.ca/files/pdf/Invasive-Plant-Guide-Sask-Forage.pdf

Jacquie Moore is a member of the Environmental Advisory Committee for the Lakeland.



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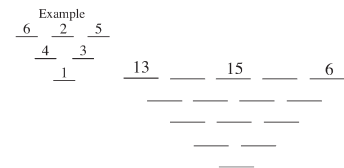
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STICKELERS [etc.]
by Terry Stickers

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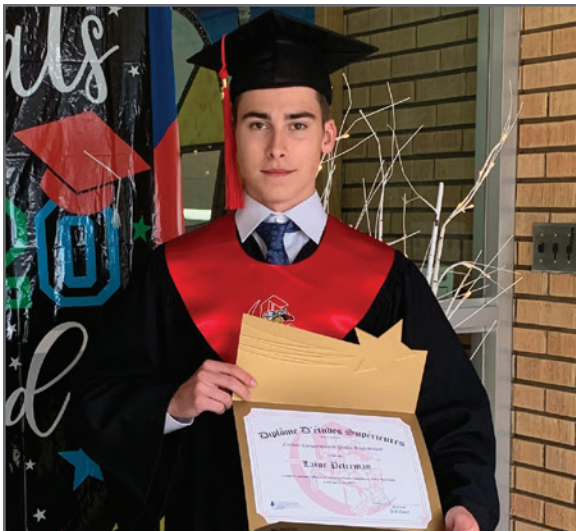
Submitted by: Jacquie Moore - a member of the Environmental Advisory Committee for the Lakeland District

The Lakeland District is special because of its remaining wilderness - to live amid this forest, alongside its wildlife, is a privilege. But being in these woods comes with an inherent risk of wildfire. Anyone who spent time in the Lakeland area during the summer of 2015 will remember the grey haze in the air, the acrid smoke that burned the eyes, the pink sun in the middle of the day. It was an eerie time, with reports of encroaching fires burning out of control around the province. The Canadian Armed Forces were called in to help, plus eight other provinces sent assistance, as did the U.S. Forest Service. Still, 1.7 million hectares of Saskatchewan forest - and the wildlife within those forests - were lost that year.

Wildfires in Saskatchewan have only two causes: lightning strikes and humans. According to the provincial government, about half of Saskatchewan wildfires are started by human activity. This includes: campfires; industrial activity; clean-up projects that get out of control; vehicle and ATV exhaust; and arson. Human-started fires usually happen in accessible areas, near communities and roads, which poses a greater threat to people and property. But regardless of how wildfires start, there's no doubt that weather plays a big role in our ability to manage them.

According to PARC (Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative) out of the University of Regina: "The Canadian Prairies have warmed at a faster rate than the global average and our future climate will be outside the range of our recent experience. Wildfire is expected to increase under climate change. Rather than allocate more resources to suppress fire, a more useful and cost-effective approach is to consider landscape-scale planning to reduce the risk of fire. Saskatchewan, along with other jurisdictions, has adopted a variety of fire management strategies to reduce the risk of wildfire and to protect communities. The strategies include an education and prevention program known as FireSmart. The program will reduce the risk from wildfire regardless of future climate conditions."

Daryl Jessop is a retired Conservation Officer and Director of Wildfire Support Services with the Ministry of Environment, a long-time resident of the Lakeland, and a member of the Environmental Advisory Committee. He explains, "FireSmart is a Canadian program developed by wildlife experts to assist property owners prepare their homes and property through planning, preparedness, and mitigation measures to reduce the risk of damage by wildfire."



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of loons and leisure craft

Written by Jacquie Moore

Signs are posted around the Lakeland lakes reminding boaters and jet skiers to "Control Your Wake". But why? If there aren't kayaks, canoes or swimmers nearby, what's the problem? There is a deeper, systemic problem with boat wakes. Boat wakes erode the shorelines, which muddies and clogs up the lake waters. They destroy the living lake ecosystem; the fish spawning habitat and the nesting loons.

Loons are a territorial bird; they return to the same lake each year to breed. According to the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, there has been a decline in chick production over the years. However, not in the Lakeland - not yet anyway. In fact, Anglin Lake has the highest population of loons per acre feet of lake in western Canada. Al Christensen, former reeve of the Lakeland, has been one of the volunteers counting loons at Anglin Lake for some 12 years now. Asked why he cares about these birds, Al laughs: "Well, anybody that lives at Anglin Lake is in love with loons! We have so many of them and the call is so haunting that you can't help but enjoy it."

"We count the loons three times in the summer," explains Al. "In mid-June, mid-July, and mid-August. In the June count we found three viable nests that had eggs in them. You stay well back so you don't disturb the bird on the nest. The male and the female take turns so that someone is on the nest at all times." Al says the numbers vary each year, but in general Anglin Lake is home to some 100 permanent resident loons.

"Because loons don't walk," says Al, "they build the nest within a foot or so of the edge of the water. So if the water comes up two inches within a short period of time, you've drowned the nest out. Boat wakes, the wash, will drown out a nest."

"Quite frankly," Al adds, "a little fishing boat with a 15-horse motor on it, if the boater isn't paying attention, can do almost as much damage to the birds as a wake boat. My mantra the whole time I was in public service is that if we operate as a bunch of good people, which we all are, there is enough room for all activities up here. You've just got to be mindful that your activity isn't screwing somebody else up."

If the Golden Rule isn't enough to motivate respectful boating practices, there is a federal rule. Transport Canada states that the province of Saskatchewan, among others, has a speed limit of 10 km/hour within 30 metres of any shoreline - whether it is posted or not.

Jarett Taylor is a Special Constable within the province, and is Supervising Officer of Lakeland District Protective Services (LDPS). Complaints regarding speeding boats come to him. "When we have had reasonable complaints and have been able to locate the boat operator, we've let them know - as an educational tool. We'll engage them and say 'just to let you know, there is a Vessel Operation Restriction Regulation that requires you to travel at a speed not greater than 10 kilometres an hour when you're within 30 metres of any shores'. The regulation is under the Canada Shipping Act 2001. If they're not compliant, there is the ability to undertake enforcement - to levy fines and have them attend court."





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bear aware

Submitted by: Jacquie Moore - a member of the Environmental Advisory Committee for the Lakeland District

Anyone who has spent much time in the Lakeland area this spring and summer is well aware that there are more bears than usual in our neighbourhoods. Besides the telltale signs of garbage cans tipped over and all sorts of garbage dragged into the trees, there have been hundreds of sightings. "It really has been a busy year for us," says Bonnie Greene, Conservation Officer for the Ministry of the Environment, stationed out of Christopher Lake. "Calls have increased in the province this year. Since April, overall we've received over 600 bear-related issues reported - compare that to 2019, we had about 525 for the same reporting time period. This includes simple sightings, bears causing issues in yards, or encounters."

The rise in bear activity in the area is partly due to Mother Nature. "We had a late spring with some cooler weather so the berry crops were late," says Bonnie, "and statistics show that when there is a late spring - slow berries - bear calls do increase." That may be why the bears came scouting around to begin with, but it's no longer the case. "A lot of the issues, when we do receive the calls, are related to the improper storage of garbage. Also bird feeders, and things that are left out like barbecues, pet food ... if there is an attractant around, a bear will certainly find it in a short period of time."

A bear's sense of smell is one of the best in the animal world. To put it in perspective, bloodhounds are famous for their tracking skills - sometimes called 'a nose with a dog attached', they have 40 times more scent receptors than humans. But bears? They can smell seven times better than a bloodhound.

Most of the bears being seen around the Lakeland are young - 1.5 to 2 years old. They're still learning to make their way in the world without their mothers, and the lure of food scraps in the garbage, or high-calorie pet food, or greasy barbecue grills is irresistible to them. "If they do find a food source, they will return many times to that same spot," says Bonnie. "It's kind of like they have a GPS; they will program an area, a location, and they will return to that many, many times to check and see if there's food there again." Once a bear is comfortable enough in proximity to humans to be showing up regularly and scavenging for food, they are more than just a nuisance. They are associating food with humans, which makes them habituated. And that is a dangerous situation for humans, and bears. At that point, they must be removed.

