

Encroachments on Reserves and other County Property

Each year brings new residents and residential properties to Lacombe County. Many of these properties are situated in country residential subdivisions, or are close to lakes or other bodies of water. Every subdivision contains reserve land that has specific uses. The Reserve Policy adopted by Lacombe County Council in December, 2006 aims to manage the County's reserve lands, protect lakeshores, public land and the natural environment, while also ensuring everyone has access to enjoy these areas.

There are two types of reserve lands: environmental and municipal. An Environmental reserve is land set aside to protect the natural environment, people and property from hazardous conditions, such as flooding and unstable slopes. It also provides public access to lakes and rivers. Municipal reserve land is intended to provide recreational areas, water access and undeveloped green space for the use and enjoyment of local residents and the general public.

In 2008 the County undertook an inventory of all these lands, which identified a number of private, unapproved developments on these reserves. These developments included storage sheds, fences, gardens, pathways, stairs, decks, lawns and fire pits located on existing environmental and municipal reserve lands. As a result of the inventory, those residents identified as having an encroachment on reserve land were issued letters indicating that the item was to be removed.

Temporary docks will be permitted to remain, as will existing trails and stairs to the lake, if they meet building codes and are approved by the County. If these developments are approved, the property owner must obtain a license; however, commercial facilities, camping and overnight use will generally not be permitted.

County employees have once again undertaken an inventory of reserve lands and have identified encroachments that remain. In the coming weeks, residents who have been identified as having an encroachment will be notified and given final notice of the requirement to remove these items.

For more information on the reserve policy and how it may affect you, contact the Operations department at (403) 782-3567.

Appropriate uses for environmental reserves (ER):

- ER lands will generally be left in their natural condition.
- Public trails may be developed where conditions are suitable.
- Along lakeshores and rivers, a limited number of public pathways and stairs may be permitted to allow safe access to the water.
- Winter storage of boat docks and boat lifts may be approved where environmental conditions are suitable.

Appropriate uses for municipal reserves (MR):

- Recreation facilities such as sports fields, play structures and skating rinks
- Associated facilities such as parking lots and washrooms
- Public trails
- Natural green spaces
- Winter storage of boat docks and boat lifts