

Sandi Benford's Bulrush Award Recognition 2024

Next up is the McIntosh Bulrush Award. This annual award is presented to an Individual or Organization that exemplifies lake stewardship activities. Activities that include the use of personal time or professional knowledge and skills to improve the environment of any Alberta Lake or lakeshore or Increase awareness of lake wellness issues to Summer Village residents

Tonight, I am pleased to announce that the 2024 recipient of the McIntosh Bulrush Award is:

Sandi Benford, Mayor of the Summer Village of South View & President of Lake Isle Aquatic Management Society.

Like other Alberta Lakes, Lake Isle struggles with weed overgrowth which was impacting the recreational quality of the lake. Benefitting from Sandi's leadership, the Lake Isle Aquatic Management Society (LIAMS) was formed in 2001 and she remains as President to this day. This society was formed to assist property owners with weed overgrowth on their shorelines and around their docks. Property owners were doing this work anyways and were often not following environmental rules and best practices, resulting in concerns about lake health in the short, medium, and long term. The formation of LIAMS helped ensure that the work was being done in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way, with proper Water Act approvals. As a founding member, Sandi continues to dedicate countless hours each year to ensure that environmental approvals remain in place, that residents are educated about weed removal and lake health, and that the weed harvesting is organized and dock and property owners have the ability to partake. In addition to her work with LIAMS, Sandi is a vocal advocate for lake health education and uses her platform as Mayor to bring important awareness to lake health issues and has even been known to go door to door to discuss this important issue, through her work with LIAMS and as Mayor. This is vital in the Summer Village as more people from the Cities are moving or buying recreational properties in the summer village and they often don't understand how their actions impact the lake.

Under Sandi's guidance and benefitting from her hours of hard work, the program has expanded to include many areas on Lake Isle, inclusive of 2 Counties, 3 camps, 2 summer villages, 4 individuals, and 15 subdivisions. In addition to ensuring that recreational lake users have access to their docks and that weeds are being harvested in an environmentally friendly manner, the weed harvesting has also been used to help prevent the spread of invasive species, specifically flowering rush, by consistently cutting off the tops of the plants to create a hostile environment. Overall, under Sandi's guidance and hard work, this organization has been pivotal in ensuring that property owners and lake users on lake Isle have an enjoyable experience while respecting the short, medium, and long-term health of their shorelines.

I ask Sandi Benford, Mayor of the Summer Village of South View to come up and accept this award.