



Strategic Plan

2021 - 2024

The **Calling Lake Community Society** is a registered not-for-profit society, located in Calling Lake, Alberta.

“Our mandate is to provide a forum for Community Development. We want to improve relationships, support Community projects, and engage all residents - from youth to Seniors and Elders, full or part time residents, and guests to Calling Lake. We seek to be a voice and conduit with Bigstone Cree Nation, the Municipal District of Opportunity and our community at large.”



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Contents

Introduction	4
The Calling Lake Area	4
Brief Overview of the History of Calling Lake Community.....	6
CLCS Vision	7
CLCS Mission	7
CLCS Desired Outcomes	7
Strategic Pillars.....	8
Pillar #1. Community Development.....	9
Pillar #2. Safety and Security.....	10
Pillar #3. Life Long Learning (Education).....	11
Pillar #4. Economic Development.....	11
Pillar #5. Recreation, Arts and Sport.....	12
Project Priorities in a Three Year Workplan.....	12
Engaging Others	14
Knowing What Success Looks Like.....	14
We Welcome your feedback!	14

WE HAVE
TO ALL GET
ON THE
SAME
PATH...

...to make
sure everyone
is lifted up!



Introduction

The Calling Lake Community Society (CLCS) is dedicated to making the Calling Lake community stronger, by recognizing there is strength in our diversity and by bringing all segments of the community together to work towards shared goals that ensure all residents succeed.

To guide its work, the CLCS has developed this strategic plan, or 'roadmap' that outlines where the community wants to go, as well as how it will get there. The document also starts to identify what resources are required to do this work, and who else needs to be involved.

As this is an ongoing process, depending on the needs of the community which may change over time, this document should be considered a perpetual 'work in progress'. Annual reviews and updates will help to ensure the CLCS stays on track to meet its overarching vision and mission.

The Calling Lake Area

The community of Calling Lake is a hamlet located along the eastern shore of Calling Lake, about 60 km north of the Town of Athabasca in northeastern Alberta (Figure 1). The hamlet is administered by the Municipal District (MD) of Opportunity No. 17, with the county office located in the hamlet of Wabasca, about 100 kms to the north.

The MD is in turn governed by the *Municipal Government Act*, which requires that it have a Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw for the entire district. The MD also has developed the Calling Lake Area Structure Plan.

Immediately north of the hamlet is the [Jean Baptiste Gambler 183 Indian reserve](#) of the [Bigstone Cree Nation](#). This area is a part of Treaty 8 as well as Region 1 of the Métis Nation of Alberta. The Calling Lake Provincial Park is found along the south shore of the lake. For more information about this area, see the [Alberta Regional Dashboard](#).

Provincially, the hamlet and MD fall within the Government of Alberta's Lower Peace Regional Plan area, as identified by the Land Use Framework and the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*. However, a regional plan, which sets the direction for development in this region, has not yet been completed. Provincially, Calling Lake falls in riding of Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater. Federally, the area is located in the federal riding of [Fort McMurray-Athabasca](#).

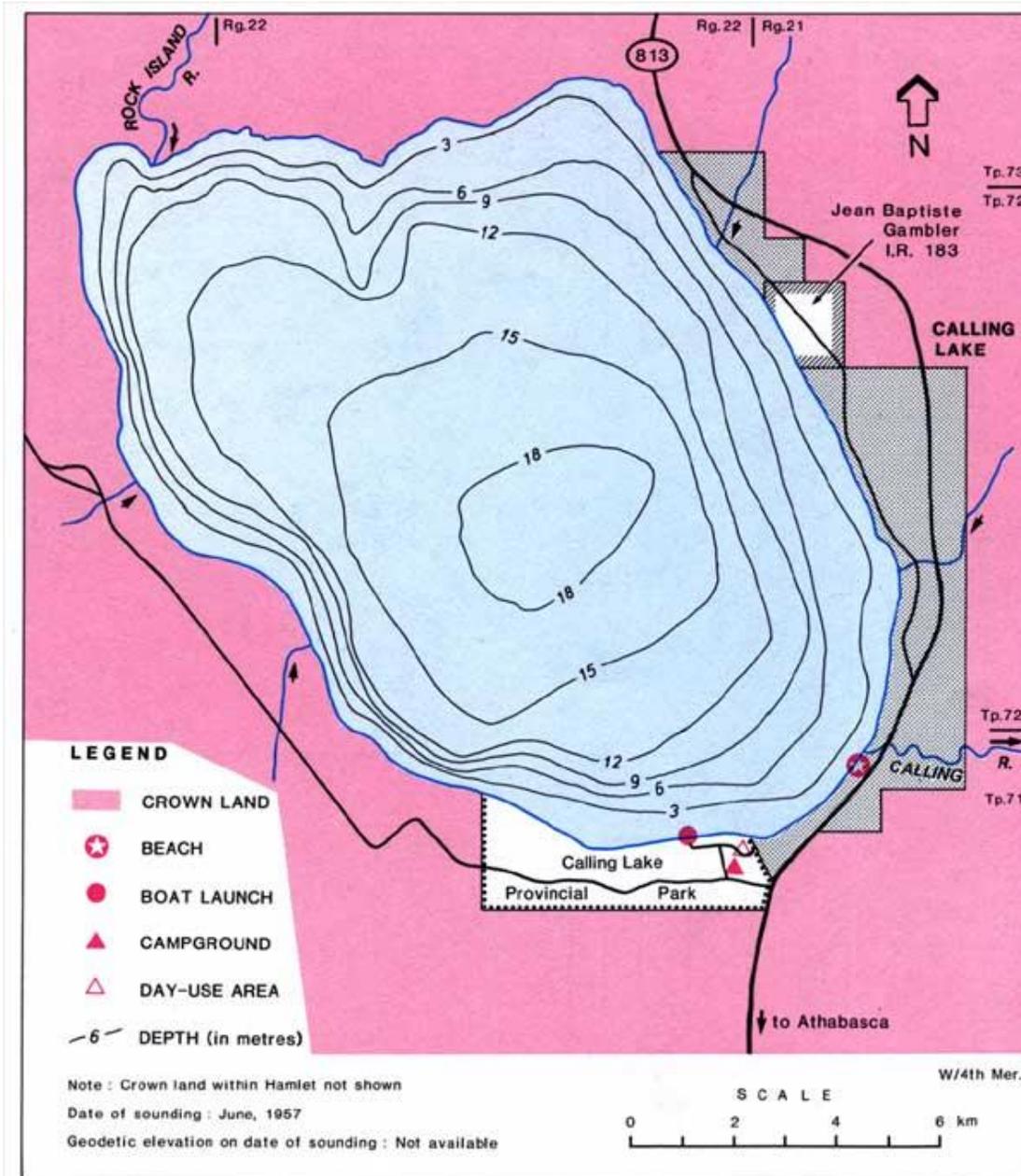


Figure 1. Map of Calling Lake from the [Atlas of Alberta Lakes](#), Prepas and Mitchell 1990, University of Alberta Press.

Brief Overview of the History of Calling Lake Community

Calling Lake was given its name because of the sounds it makes when it freezes in the winter: these sounds are often heard echoing for a long distance. At least several hundred years before explorers and settlers turned their attention to this area, Indigenous peoples visited the shores of Calling Lake. Evidence of early occupation was found at sites near the Calling River (on Mr. Ken Sutton's property) in the studies carried out in 1964-67 by Dr. Ruth Gruhn of the University of Alberta (Gruhn 1981). Researchers consider these sites characteristic of seasonal hunting or fishing camps. Elders of Calling Lake recall an oral tradition that says First Nations people followed a migration pattern, living at Calling Lake for a time to fish off the lake and then moving to Rock Island to hunt.¹

The Calling River, which leaves Calling Lake at the southeast corner of the lake, meanders east until it discharges to the larger Athabasca River, connecting this area to a major waterway. This transportation corridor of the 1700s brought traders, settlers, missionaries and Indigenous peoples from the east, who in turn spread out from established settlements like Lac La Biche to hunt, fish, farm and trade in unoccupied lands such as Calling Lake.

In the late 1800s, the federal government negotiated Treaty 8.² The treaty was initially signed by the Woodland Cree at Grouard, and then signed in other communities including Wabasca (in 1899 by Chief Joseph Bigstone). With the signing of the Treaty, several "Indian Reserves" were established including Jean Baptiste Gambler Reserve at Calling Lake. Charles Mair wrote about this area as he passed through it in 1899 with the Treaty Commission.³ He commented on the need for an improved wagon road ("instead of the present dog-trail") from Wabasca to Rock Island Lake, past Calling Lake and on to the Athabasca Landing. He also described the Commission's stop at the mouth of the Calling River – one of their points of distribution of scrip payments – and of meeting one of Calling Lake's oldest inhabitants, Marie Rose Gladue. Mr. Mair remarked that the common language spoken at that time was mostly Cree with a bit of English and French.

After Alberta became a province in 1905, the area northeast of Lesser Slave Lake, including Calling Lake, was placed under the administration of Improvement District 17 East (North). In 1995, it was incorporated as the Municipal District of Opportunity. In the late 1950s, the government opened Calling Lake to "Cottagers" and lots were drawn for and developed over the next 10 years or so. As the municipality developed and as land was made available by various means, it made it possible for more people to stay and the community started to take on the character as we know it today. Today,

¹ Personal communication Avard Mann as well as notes from the May 5, 2011 Calling Lake Historical Celebration workshop.

² For information on Treaty 8, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_8.

³ For more about the Treaty Commission, see *Through the Mackenzie Basin* by Charles Mair and R. MacFarlane, William Briggs publisher, 1908.

approximately 300 people live in the Hamlet of Calling Lake.⁴ Another 250 members of the Bigstone Cree Nation live on Jean Baptiste Gambler Indian Reserve.

Over the years, the Calling Lake community has enjoyed several social activities, such as quilting and sailing clubs, senior and student activities, and various fundraisers organized by a diversity of volunteers and clubs. In the 1990s, the Calling Lake Cabin Owners Association formed in order to better organize community initiatives such as the newsletter and annual pancake breakfast and auction.

In 2020, the Association again thought about how to improve communications and engagement of all. At its annual general meeting, more than 75 % of the members voted to change the name to the Calling Lake Community Society, including changing the by-Laws to reflect inclusion of all residents living in the Calling Lake community. Today, the CLCS builds on its past experience, while broadening its mandate to work with the entire community to build a “Calling Lake Culture” – a culture that speaks to all by improving communications and sharing information with all community members. The CLCS also hopes to build capacity for community development projects that enrich the Calling Lake experience. This will be achieved by fostering relationships locally, but also with federal, provincial and municipal governments, Indigenous communities and other interested parties.

CLCS Vision

The Calling Lake community is happy, healthy and thriving economically.

CLCS Mission

To provide a forum for community development by improving relationships, supporting community projects, and engaging all residents - from youth to Seniors and Elders, full or part time residents, and guests to Calling Lake. To be a voice for our community at large and a conduit to other interested parties that can bring needed support to Calling Lake.

CLCS Desired Outcomes

The CLCS will have achieved its vision and mission if the following outcomes are achieved:

1. Community pride is evident to residents and visitors.
2. Community volunteerism and collaboration is high.
3. There are many education, employment and career opportunities and support for youth, workers and local businesses.
4. Seniors are valued and support is available to them.
5. Residents have opportunities to participate in a variety of arts and recreation events.
6. Adults walk the talk and model best behavior to youth.

⁴ See the Calling Lake [2016 census profile](#) and the Jean Baptiste Gambler 183 [2016 Census profile](#).

After some discussion about their strengths and weaknesses, the new society decided to document their intentions by creating this strategic plan.

Community Strengths & Opportunities	Community Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community spirit • Diversity, different ideas • Individuality, creativity • Motivated volunteers • Energized youth • Access to many resources • Support networks • Connections to the MD of Opportunity and the Government of Alberta. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical challenges due to the pandemic • Skepticism • Limited capacity • Different visions, different priorities • Volunteer recruitment, retention and burnout

Additionally, the Society reviewed several past community initiatives, and from these, identified several ‘learnings’ that inform the development of this strategic plan as follows:

- The people of Calling lake love to get together to socialize at functions (e.g., pancake breakfasts, family campouts, block parties, performances, etc.).
- They also like to connect with other communities, especially via events like ball tournaments, fishing derbies, hockey leagues, music festivals, etc.
- Like all communities, Calling Lake has its challenges and the CLCS and other volunteer organizers may need to reach out even more than before to involve the entire community.
- In the past, there hasn’t been as much focus on businesses as there could be in the future, which could include events like trade shows, parking lot markets, job fairs, etc.

Strategic Pillars

In order to achieve its vision, mission and desired outcomes, the CLCS envisions developing a number of community initiatives. Potential projects can be grouped under five strategic pillars of community development, as follows:

1. Community Development
2. Safety and Security within our community
3. Education, including grade school and post-secondary adult education
4. Economic Development
5. Recreation, Arts and Sport

Each of these pillars plays an important role in developing and maintaining our Calling Lake Culture. Within each of these areas there will be many common threads and these must be all woven together. Each pillar is described in more detail in the following sections.

Pillar #1. Community Development

This pillar will include initiatives that help Calling Lake be a thriving community, with many opportunities for residents to be engaged.

Project Name	Project Description	Need to Succeed
Documenting Calling Lake History	Encourage research and publication on the history of the Calling Lake area and its people including developing a small museum and historical document repository and selling historical books.	Volunteers to gather existing historical information; physical space for storage, displays and meetings. Assistance writing grant proposals.
Building Community Pride	Promote community pride projects such as communities in bloom and the Christmas decoration contest.	Volunteers to organize and judge participants; funds for small prizes.
Celebrating Indigenous Culture	Encourage the development of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Métis Centres, Indigenous art and dance displays, June 21 National Indigenous Peoples celebration, etc.	Volunteer organizer(s) and liaison with indigenous organizations such as Treaty 8 Technical Services Advisory Group, Métis Nation of Alberta, etc. Promotion via the newsletter, website and social media.
Calling Lake Spirit Communication and Outreach	Publish and distribute <i>The Calling Lake Spirit</i> newsletter 4-8 times a year including a youth/ school news page. Develop and add content to a website, social media, etc. Run an annual photo competition and use it to produce and distribute an annual calendar to raise awareness about the CLCS.	Volunteer newsletter editors, writers, photographers, etc. Donations to cover printing costs. Web and social media volunteers. Photo competition organizer.
Lake Health Matters!	Be knowledgeable about lake health and able to direct residents to lake information.	A volunteer to research and post links to lake information on the CLCS website.
Growing the CLCS	Continue to meet at least 4 times a year and promote board development. Strike a finance committee and organize small fundraisers (e.g., Purdy's Chocolate sales, Pancake Breakfast and auction, book sales, casino). Grow membership and appreciate board members and other volunteers with an annual event like a salmon bake.	Volunteer Directors, Finance committee volunteers.
Engaging Others	Reach out to other authorities that have a responsibility to the Calling Lake community including the MD of Opportunity, relevant Government of Alberta departments and agencies.	Volunteer to reach out to authorities and agencies. (e.g., Municipal Affairs, Alberta Health, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Energy Regulator, etc.)

Pillar #2. Safety and Security

Residents must feel safe and secure in their homes and neighborhoods.

Project Name	Project Description	Need to Succeed
<i>Building a Strong Community Policing Presence</i>	Maintain good contact with the RCMP and advocate for a resident position through application to the MD in partnership with Big Stone Cree Nation.	Volunteer to liaison with the RCMP.
<i>Neighborhood Watch/ Citizens on Patrol</i>	Continue to encourage residents to 'if you see it, report it' including submitting video surveillance to authorities to help with investigations. Offer Community on Patrol (COP) training.	RCMP
<i>Calling Lake Search and Rescue</i>	In addition to search and rescue courses, also look for opportunities to provide survival, fishing and trapping courses that get people outside connecting to nature/the land and traditional activities.	Volunteer organizer
<i>Restorative Justice</i>	Advocate for opportunities that bring healing and reparation to Calling Lake victims of crime, as well as reintegration of perpetrators. Advocate for an addiction healing centre, young offender's rehabilitation program, creative sentencing and other community service programs.	Volunteer to liaison with Big Stone Cree Addiction Counselor, Big Stone Cree Community wellness program, Aspen Community Health school family wellness worker, and other support networks.
<i>Appreciating and Supporting Seniors</i>	Support the seniors centre and programs like the firewood program; small bereavement grants.	Volunteer organizer
<i>Mental Health and Wellness Initiatives</i>	Organize a trade-show type health and wellness day. Include the school and perhaps tie in with a golf tournament at Wabasca.	Volunteer to apply for funds and organize an event(s).

Pillar #3. Life Long Learning (Education)

Calling Lake residents have access to grade school and post-secondary adult education and other life-long learning educational opportunities, without having to leave the community.

Project Name	Project Description	Need to Succeed
<i>The Calling Lake Book Club</i>	Support the Calling Lake library by starting a book club with activities like a book signing events by local authors.	Volunteer organizer
<i>Calling Lake School Graduates Club</i>	Support the school and increase the number of Calling Lake high school graduates by bringing motivational speakers/role models in to talk to students. Set up student awards, scholarships etc.	Volunteer organizer
<i>School, Work and Mid-Career Transitions Support Program</i>	Help high school students, young adults and mid-career adults navigate their career path by working with local industry and businesses to create more opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, job fairs, work experience, upgrading courses, etc.	A part-time career counselor through the Northlands School Division.
<i>Developing Future Community Leaders</i>	Develop a mentoring project that connects youth to members of the community. Create a youth position on the CLCS board.	Volunteer organizer
<i>Calling Lake Post-Secondary Campus</i>	Create more opportunities for advanced education by partnering with NAIT to develop a regional campus on the old Job Corp site. Develop a Registered Apprenticeship Program.	Volunteer to pursue

Pillar #4. Economic Development

Calling Lake has a thriving economy that includes a diversity of small businesses and local industry.

Project Name	Project Description	Need to Succeed
<i>Support local small businesses</i>	Encourage 'spend local' initiatives via events like the Parking Lot Market and spring online market. Promote small business initiatives by including articles in the newsletter and links on the website.	Volunteer organizers
<i>Support local industries</i>	Hold industry appreciation events (trade show, awards, etc.) and include industry profiles in the newsletter. Attract industry, like mobile home manufacturing, to the old mill site.	Volunteer organizer
<i>Support workers</i>	Organize a day care facility.	Day care operator

Pillar #5. Recreation, Arts and Sport

Opportunities for recreation, arts and sport are available to Calling Lake residents.

Project Name	Project Description	Need to Succeed
Kids Can Play! Youth sport association	Use sports and arts to build kid's confidence: support the recreation centre re-opening; upgrade local playgrounds and organize summer outdoor programs (e.g., slow pitch league, junior fishing derby). Organize winter sports programs. Develop a school archery program.	Volunteers to organize a new youth sport association and activities
Club Directory	Put links/contacts to all clubs (e.g., Spruce Country Stitchers, Quilting Club, CL Sailing Club, etc.) on the CLCS website and promote via the newsletter	Volunteer organizer
Calling Lake Pitch and Put	Advocate for the development of a local golf course/pitch and put/driving range.	Volunteer organizer
Adult Sports League	Organize baseball in the summer; hockey / curling in the winter.	Volunteer organizer

Project Priorities in a Three Year Workplan

While the five pillars above provide a framework for organizing activities, there is likely more work than is possible by a small volunteer organization. However, the more volunteers that pitch in, the more the CLCS can achieve!

Keeping potential volunteer numbers and capacity in mind, the CLCS looked at what projects were feasible in the short-term, and what might need to be deferred until more resources or expertise are available. From the list of projects, the CLCS has agreed to focus on several priority projects each year, for the next three years as follows:

Pillar	Projects	2021-2022	2023	2024
1. Community Development	<i>Documenting Calling Lake History</i>		√	
	<i>Building Community Pride</i>	√		
	<i>Celebrating Indigenous Culture</i>	√		
	<i>CL Spirit Communication and Outreach</i>	√		
	<i>Lake Health Matters!</i>	√		
	<i>Growing the CLCS</i>	√		
	<i>Engaging Others</i>	√		
2. Safety and Security	<i>Building a Strong Community Policing Presence</i>		√	
	<i>Neighborhood Watch/ Citizens on Patrol</i>	√		
	<i>Calling Lake Search and Rescue</i>	√		
	<i>Restorative Justice</i>		√	
	<i>Supporting Seniors</i>	√		
	<i>Mental Health and Wellness</i>	√		
3. Life Long Learning	<i>The Calling Lake Book Club</i>		√	
	<i>Calling Lake School Graduates Club</i>		√	
	<i>School, Work and Mid-Career Transitions Support Program</i>		√	
	<i>Developing Future Community Leaders</i>		√	
	<i>Calling Lake Post-Secondary Campus</i>			√
4. Economic Development	<i>Support local small businesses</i>	√		
	<i>Support local industries</i>	√		
	<i>Support workers</i>		√	
5. Recreation Arts and Sport	<i>Kids Can Play! Youth sport association</i>		√	
	<i>Club Directory</i>	√		
	<i>Calling Lake Pitch and Put</i>			√
	<i>Adult Sports League</i>		√	

Engaging Others

To be successful in developing the projects listed above, the CLCS knows it needs to engage a variety of other people, communities and organizations. While this is not exhaustive list, the CLCS must work to engage:

- Government of Alberta (both elected officials and department staff)
- M.D of Opportunity (elected officials, ward 2 councillors, staff)
- Big Stone Cree Nation, Treaty 8 First Nations, Métis Associations
- Full and part-time residents (kids, adults, seniors) / Volunteers
- Potential Funders
- School/educators, Seniors Centre, Library, Firehall, etc.
- Businesses and industry in the area
- Educators
- Neighboring communities

Knowing What Success Looks Like

The CLCS will know it is being successful when:

- The number of visits to the CLCS webpage is increasing.
- The number of volunteers recruited to the board and helping out with events is increasing.
- The number of people talking about and participating in local events is increasing.
- Municipal Councillors see value and participate in CLCS activities.
- The CLCS is supported by a variety of funding sources.
- CLCS programs are successful and sustainable.
- Calling Lake residents are having fun, while supporting and respecting each other.
- Calling Lake youth feel supported and have a variety of opportunities to be engaged in the community.

We Welcome your feedback!

Currently, the CLCS is reaching out to as many individuals and organizations as possible to get their feedback on the CLCS strategic plan, and in particular, priority activities. If you would like to provide your input, please send an email with your thoughts to callinglakecommunity@gmail.com.

*Thank you for your support of the
Calling Lake Community!*