

Initial Feedback Summary: Pine Sands Vegetation Management

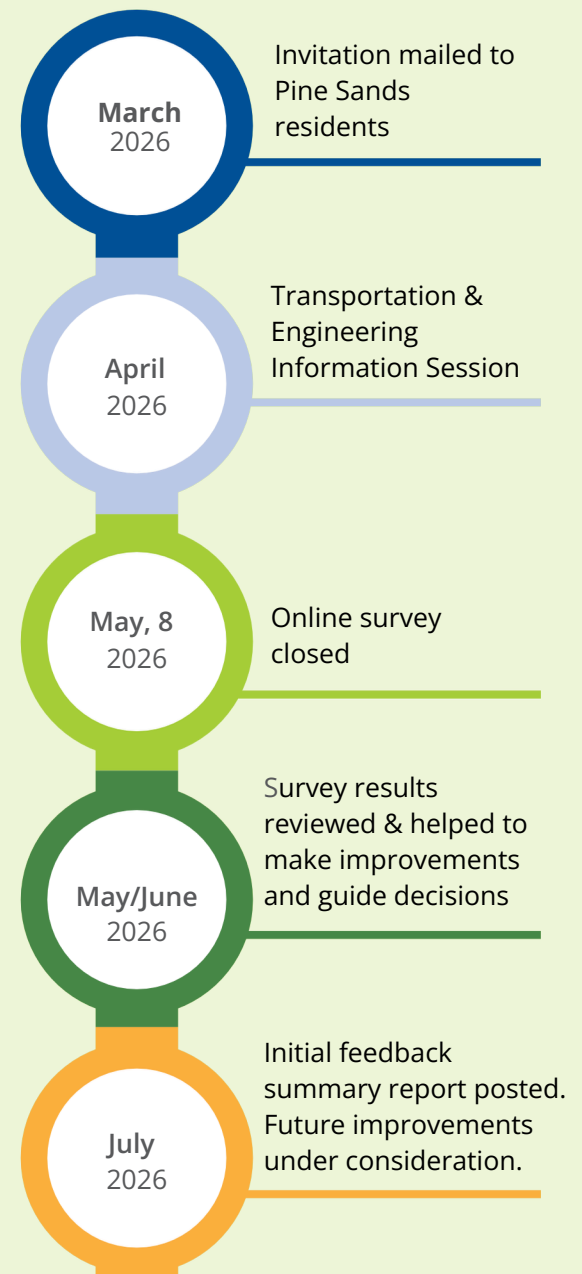
Background

Sturgeon County is taking over care of the Sandy Lake accretion lands and expanding the Municipal Reserve near Pine Sands. This area is environmentally sensitive and must be managed under federal and provincial environmental rules to protect birds and habitat. In 2020, mowing was reduced to better protect wildlife, but this has led to more resident concerns about how the area looks and is being maintained.

Sturgeon County staff and staff from Solstice Environmental Management and the Alberta Lake Management Society attended the Transportation & Engineering Road Work Ahead Information Session in Calahoo on April 16, 2026. Postcards were mailed to Pine Sands residents to invite them to the April 16 meeting where they would have a chance to talk with staff.

The purpose was to share information on the beachfront vegetation management at Pine Sands.

Among those in attendance, were about 20 to 30 Pine Sands residents. They shared information and feedback with the staff.



Have Questions?

Call 780-939-8349 or email
osas@sturgeoncounty.ca.

Public Engagement

How We Asked

In mid-March, a postcard was mailed to Pine Sands residents inviting them to the April 16 meeting and providing a link to an on-line survey. Residents were able to talk with staff and provide comments / feedback at this event.

The online survey was available on Sturgeon County's Engage website to collect additional information. The survey was published (publicly available) on March 20, 2026, and closed on May 8, 2026.

Who Provided Input

Five anonymous online survey submissions were received.

What We Asked

There were four questions on the survey.

- How do you use the beach/lake (walking, kayaking/canoeing, wildlife watching, picnics, exploring with family, other (with space to enter an answer).
Responses: walking, kayaking/canoeing, wildlife watching, exploring with family, picnics, quadding.
- How have changes in recent years affected how you view or use the beach/lake?
Responses: Concerns were expressed around the tall vegetation and difficulty accessing the water.
- What do you think are the benefits of maintaining the shoreline in a naturalized state?
Responses: more ecosystems, beauty, habitat for the birds, and less erosion. Some feel naturalization efforts are excessive and have concerns about the disadvantages of naturalization.
- What types of neighbourhood learning opportunities interest you?
Responses: Workshops and seminars, desire to better understand the cause of the receding water level.

Thank you to everyone who participated. Once the accretion land transfer is finalized, a follow-up report will share how community feedback helped shape the County's understanding of local priorities and informed future land management decisions for the area.

What We Heard



Beachfront Vegetation Management

Residents expressed concerns about how the vegetation along the beach front is being managed. Key concerns included the impact of the tall vegetation on their ability to access and enjoy the lake as well as causing safety concerns for pets and children. Some residents also noted that trees in certain areas are obstructing views of the lake.



Sandy Lake Wilderness Area

Many Pine Sands residents currently access the Sandy Lake Wilderness Area (SLWA) by walking north through adjacent lands. Residents expressed concern that access along the beachfront will be restricted by fencing in the future. Some residents were also concerned that Off Highway Vehicles will not be permitted in SLWA.



Receding Lake Levels

Historically, Sandy Lake was used for many recreational activities, including fishing derbies, boating, and swimming. Residents expressed significant concerns that lower water levels are negatively affecting how they can access and use the lake, particularly due to soft ground conditions near the shoreline. Residents would like studies to be done on the lake to determine the cause of the lower water levels. Residents would also like to be able to access the lake easier through docks or boat launches.