



HISTORY OF GREEN ACRES

1949 and Earlier

In the late 1800's Green Acres was known as "Herbert's Stopping House". It was half way between Red Deer and the Three Hills area, so people traveling back and forth had a place to stay. This became our home/coffee shop for many years. It was located near the memorial park.

My parents, Dave and Lucy, came to what was then known as Rushton's Resort, with his brother, to start a new

life. (This is the part of the park, known now as #1-#171, from the entrance down the hill.). This was all brush. I, Danny was one year old. Ken was born a year later.

After a few years they came to realize that two families could not make a living, so with a toss of the coin, my Dad lost the toss (so he would joke) and we stayed at Pine Lake and bought out the uncle who moved back to Calgary.

At the time we had 33 row boats, 1 boat with a motor, 10 cabins and about 30 tenting sites. The wooden row boats would all be rented out, but no one wanted to pay extra for a motor boat, so we would have to take the motor off to rent it out. My Grandfather, mom's dad, had a little trailer by the boats so he took care of renting the boats with Ken and I, as young as I can remember working with him. Ken remembers us out skiing and would be waved in so we could rent out a boat! There was no limit on the amount of fish caught, so out they would go with a potato sack and always came back with it full to the brim of perch. At one time they used to stock other lakes with the perch from Pine Lake. Catching a 20 lb pike was not uncommon. (Note it was a pound then, not kilogram)

My dad was an electrician by trade so worked throughout Pine Lake to supplement the campground. For many years we would move back to Calgary for the winter so both parents could work.

My dad would often recall how after a rain, he would have to use the tractor to tow campers up and down the hill.

A point of interest is that, one family was here before we were in 1949. We are proud to say that his son still camps here - an honor for us indeed! Thanks you.

We decided to change the name of Rushton's Resort so held a contest to choose the name. Bob and Eileen McMurdo won with the submitted name "Green Acres" and so it was.

1960's - 1980's

In the mid-sixties, there was a cabin cruiser built by a local private farmer, called "Lady of the Lake", that would take people on tours around the lake.

I worked up north in the winter on the pipeline to help supplement the park and to start construction of more sites. In the early seventies I decided to construct all new sites (which are now the levels or 100's). This was basically just one huge hill with solid trees. It was so steep that a vehicle had to angle its way down! This took a lot of hard labor and time to complete. I'm still proud of these sites to this day. It was a vision of mine. This is also when I realized sites needed to be larger to accommodate the increasing size of trailers. By this time some were up to a whopping 24 feet! Thus 30 amp power was installed.

Also in the early sixties, my dad bought the first "speed" boat on Pine Lake. It was an old used wooden boat with an 18 hp Evinrude. It was the fastest boat on the lake! Ken recalls going down one morning before school to discover

the boat had sunk. He bailed it out, came back after school only to discover it had sunk again. The screws had worked through, so had to sand it all to repair it.

Also, in the later seventies, the campground next to us - owned by a Harry Dunn - Pine Cove - approached us wanting to sell his campground. Our family decided to take a chance and expand. This is what we now know as the north 200's through to the 600's. It was mainly a large field that could hold up to 600 tents and small trailers, although the sites from 300 to 400 had started with power and sewer.

There was also a small coffee shop, which later we moved to from the old house. We communicated from the coffee shop to the boat house with an old crank telephone! What is now the laundry room was the central washrooms.

Also, back then there was no such thing as debit/credit cards, so my job at the end of the days was to hike up to the gate, collect all the cash and bring it down to my mom to balance for the day. I was in the habit of always collecting garbage along the way, soooooooo a few days after one such collection my mom was quite concerned that her balancing didn't work out but QUITE A BIT! After considerable questioning, back up the hill I hiked, checking along the way, and sure enough, safely tucked in one of the garbage bins, was the sack of money! Oops - I didn't live that down for quite some time!

1980's

Fishing was a huge part of Pine Lake. I updated the boat house to accommodate an ultra-modern fish cleaning station that held one huge garburator in the centre of a stainless steel table that up to 8 people could clean fish and tell their fishing stories. It was a great gathering place. The coffee shop's biggest sales were worms, blood suckers, and minnows! My brother Ken and I would go out every week collecting the suckers, count them out one by one, putting them in cups that sold twelve for 35 cents.

The coffee shop was noted for the best homemade pies in the country!

Tractor rides officially began in the late 80's and were always one of my biggest pleasures. Often with Bob Beaudreau at my side, waving and making sure everyone got off and on safely.

This was also when I made my first big garbage truck purchase! The cost of garbage collecting was getting so high and we were at the mercy of whenever the company came. On long weekends the garbage was piled so high we didn't know what to do with it!

1990

In 1990 I started another new era of my life and married Lexy and I became the proud father of 4 beautiful children - Stacy, Justin, Garth and Dixie. Life was never

boring! Justin, Garth and I became quite a management team with Lexy, Stacy and Dixie managing the gate and coffee shop.

We then decided to take on another project and took over the management of Aspen Beach Provincial Park which Justin and Dixie managed and I got to be garbage man driving back and forth to Aspen twice a week to pick up garbage. I loved giving that job up! Lucky Justin!

This was also around this time we decided to go completely seasonal, a choice we have never regretted as we feel we have gotten to know our customers far better.

During this time, the entire community of Pine Lake worked many years on the Pine Lake restoration. Resorts, farmers and cottage owners, all together with one common goal - to improve the water quality of Pine Lake. After much research, it was determined that the "Hypolemic" system was installed. This was funded through government and local fundraisings. This consisted of a mile long pipe laid in the bottom of the lake. The purpose was to draw the bottom water, which contains the more phosphate enriched water, via gravity flow, and out. A weir at the end of the lake was to help maintain a suitable level of less nutrient water to flow. Pine Lake was considered a perfect lake for this project as it has several streams that flow into the lake, but only one that flows out.

Our boat docks have come a long way also. In the beginning we would have to wade into the freezing water in the spring, pound in posts then lay down planks for walkways. We began the new dock system shortly before 2000 and expanded from there on.

2000

Disaster hit Pine Lake with a tornado and Green Acres was in its direct path. The storm lasted barely 5 minutes with 13 lives lost. The storm flatten over half of the park and there was considerable destruction on the other side. It was truly one of the lowest times of our lives. After a long talk with our family we decided the only choice was to rebuild. It was amazing at the volunteer help that arrived. There were thousands of people helping to pick up garbage and restore, many friends and neighbors, but so many total strangers that we were astounded at the kindness and generosity of people. Everyone worked countless weeks and months. Over half of our campers remained to stay and rebuild, even without power for many days. Without their positive attitude and strength, I am sure we could not have done it! As we began to rebuild, we realized again that time was moving forward with larger trailers, having up to 5 slides! Again sites needed to be expanded and now more need of 50 amp power. At this time, any cabins remaining were discontinued. It was also at this time our friend and banker encouraged us to borrow BIG and thus my next dream of a swimming pool came into fruition.

Over the years, together with you, we have held many fundraisers. Just a few to mention was:

- the Wine and Cheese Fashion Shows (for the Women's Shelter)
- The Garth Memorial Golf Tournaments (for a Water Spray Park in Delburne)
- The Service Dogs for Autism (raised enough for 3 dogs)
- The Chili Cook-off
- 50/50 draws

So much fun! This has brought our park closer together as a family.

The sports court has been a dream of mine for over five years so I am thrilled to see its completion! It began with over a year of planning and preparation. Next came 86 cement trucks, non-stop pouring from seven in the morning till one at night! The trucks came from many places! It was quite a sight to see! Then all the real hard work began. Our maintenance staff worked tirelessly for many days to put it all together as you see it today! I believe, over time, it will become very popular.

I would be remiss to not mention the fantastic staff that we have had over the years. We have been so fortunate and I wish I could mention them all because without them and their great service to you - our customers - we would not be where we are today. They are such a team that that it

is a pleasure to watch them work together. Another factor that we can never forget is you - our very special customers. Without you there would not be a Green Acres. I wish I could mention every one of you personally, but am so proud to acknowledge that we even have several "four generation" families here and even more "three generation" families. Also exciting is the fact that we now have "four generations of our family" working at the park!

Thus our new sign

FRIENDS BECOME FAMILY.

