

## What is a “Summer Village”

A summer village is a type of municipal status used in Alberta. It was instituted in 1913 with the incorporation of the **Summer Village of Gull Lake**, the first Summer Village in Alberta. A number of others were given this status in the same year and many more in later years. The designation was used in resort areas that were mainly active in the summer and where most residents were seasonal. While there were residents who lived in summer villages year round, these villages generally had fewer than 300 permanent homeowners. Cottage owners did not want to pay for municipal services that they didn't need, but they did want to have a voice in the local government of the resort area.

Changes were made to provincial laws to allow election for office in summer villages. These elections were to be held in July ( as opposed to January which was the case in communities designated as “villages”) and allowed seasonal residents to run for office and vote without losing these right in their place of permanent residency.

The following excerpt from the preamble to the Provincial Statue explained the problem faced by resort owners “ Whereas owing to the fact that none of the owners of said lands reside thereon during the winter months, they are not in a position to exercise their right to vote at the annual election for councillors,(sic) nor to offer themselves for election as councillor and consequently have no voice or representation in the government of the village and no practical means of in anyway supervisiing the expenditure of the revenue derived from taxes paid in respect of the said lands.”

Over the years, the formation of new summer villages often coincided with sharp rises in municipal taxes imposed by rural municipalities.

There are currently 51 summer villages in Alberta and some of the early ones have changed their designation.( Sylvan Lake for example). There will be no more, however. In 1995 legislation was passed to prevent the formation of new summer villages though the existing ones were permitted to continue.

You can find a complete list of the summer villages in alberta and the dates they were incorporated at “List of summer villages in Alberta”. Wikipedia.org.

#### Reference

“The History of Summer Villages”. Association of Summer Villages of Alberta. Retrieved 2012-05-05