

Family Homestead Turned Campground

Hilah Ayers Wilderness RV Park is located less than an hour south of Edmonton and a half a kilometre from the shores of Pigeon Lake. The 45-acre gated campground is nestled among the towering spruce trees at Mulhurst Bay.

This family-oriented RV Park features 205 fully serviced lots that have either 15- or 30-amp power and full sewer and water hookups. The park also offers several children's playgrounds, private and spacious lots, a shower house, security cameras, nine-hole mini-golf, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, and is within walking distance to Pigeon Lake and a boat launch.

But what makes this RV Park unique is its rich history. The property was originally bought back in 1912 by Cindy Servatius' great-grandfather, Hilah Ayers.

"My great-grandmother and great-grandfather came from Arkansas in 1912 and they homesteaded here and farmed the land that way until he passed away," explains Servatius. "In 1972, when my great-grandmother passed, she left the property to her grandson, Carl Brown, who was my uncle – he was my mom's brother. When he could no longer work the property, he gave the land title to my mother, and we had decided to make it into a campground in 1989.

"As kids growing up, we always loved to go camping, but there was nothing on our side of the lake, so that's why we decided to make this property into a campground," says Servatius. "And that's all it really was for the first 10 years. Then we started developing the RV lots. We put our heart and soul into this land."

"It took four years to develop the first phase," says Servatius. "We started working the land with a little mini [tractor], a couple of old trucks, and an old International. We cut out all the trees ourselves, so we always had a lot of firewood for the weekenders. The shower house got built because my mom and dad sold their house in order to pay for it. They lived in a 19-foot trailer for a full year until we borrowed enough money for a brand new mobile home for them to live here as security."

Servatius and her family built Phase 2 about

10 years later and celebrated its completion with a huge fireworks display during the August Long Weekend and Mulhurst Days, a tradition that continues today.

"After 9/11 we built more lots because of the demand," says Servatius. "People wanted to stay in their own backyard, so we started Phases 3 and 4. We always had weekenders with seasonal mixed together, but then we went more to seasonal. But we still have room for the weekenders."

In 2012, Servatius and her siblings decided to sell the property to Brian Knutson.

"I wanted to finish the dream that we had started and we knew that Brian would further our vision," says Servatius, who stayed on and became the park coordinator. "This is the only way of life that I always remember and I just couldn't turn my back on it. I can't imagine getting up in the summer and not being here at the park."

"We took over the campground in 2012," says Kyle Knutson. "When my dad wanted to step down, I sort of took over managing the property, and we have a lot of great things planned for the place."

"We are also hoping to build a stage area and host a whole bunch of public events. We already host concerts on the July-long and August-long," says Knutson. "We're also hoping to do a movie night, where we'll pick one night of the week and screen feature films."

Knutson adds there are plans for boat and RV storage that will be fenced and secure. The posts and pilings are currently being put in to fence the property and automatic gates will soon be added. A rental shop for kayaks and canoes is also being planned. A fifth phase is being planned and Knutson is currently working with the county to do further development, including sites that will feature 50-amp power.

"This has always been an attraction for the people in the area who want to come by and enjoy the land," says Knutson. "We still have spots for about 30 overnights, and we encourage people to come and see our park, to see how lovely it is."

Mulhurst Bay

Mulhurst Bay is located on the east shores of Pigeon Lake – and as with many central-Alberta lakes, offers an abundance of year-round outdoor activities.

Amenities within Mulhurst Bay include a general store, along with an adjacent liquor store and laundry – as well as a cafe and ice cream parlour, and the Cedar Crest Inn – a local restaurant and pub.

Pigeon Lake offers great fishing, swimming and boating, and hikers can explore the 12 km of trails – scouting for wildlife or searching the skies for the large variety of migrating birds. For golfers, there are four courses and a mini-golf within close proximity.

Located a short 22 km away, the town of Westeros should be able to accommodate most other needs – from hardware stores and hair salons, pharmacies and furniture, groceries and gas stations, clothing boutiques and coffee houses.

Pigeon Lake by Mulhurst Bay

