

# WILLIAMS LAKE

May, 2010

## CONSERVATION COMPANY

[www.williamslakecc.org](http://www.williamslakecc.org)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING · MONDAY, MAY 17 AT 7:30 P.M.  
CAPTAIN WILLIAM SPRY CENTRE · 10 KIDSTON ROAD

Our mandate is to protect the health of Williams Lake for the benefit of all. Through our website and newsletter we try to keep area residents and other friends of Williams Lake informed about issues affecting the lake and its watershed.

Is your area represented on the Board of Directors? You do not have to be a member in order to join us at the Annual General Meeting on May 17. Everyone who shares our mandate is invited to attend and/or become a member (see membership information and form at end of newsletter). WLCC membership is \$20 per household and can be paid at the AGM or by returning the attached form.



Beautiful Williams Lake. Photo courtesy of Kathleen Singleton

### ANNUAL CLEAN-UP

The annual WLCC clean up of the Williams Lake area was held last October 17<sup>TH</sup>. Thanks go to Alex Morris and Matthew Zwicker who helped organize the event for us. We appreciated the participation of their fellow students from Ambrae Academy and Halifax Grammar School who worked hard through the morning. We had a good turn out, including our MLA Michele Raymond. With the younger crowd participating we were able to do a more comprehensive clean up of the area.

First prize for the biggest single item was claimed by the team of Bruce Rae and Evan Ross for a discarded barbecue. We seemed to have a theme with quite a few balls from various sports, and of course the usual Tim Hortons coffee cups, cigarette butts, fast food wrappers, plastic bags and a computer monitor. Total load was 17 large green bags with another two collected around the Colpitt Lake shoreline. On a positive note there seemed to be less broken glass and discarded bottles this year. Hopefully the clean up will not be necessary in future but in the meantime, thanks to all who helped out. Come and join us for the next clean up in the fall.

### IN MEMORIAM - JANE LAW

This spring our community lost a very well known member. Jane Shaw Law passed away on March 6th, 2010. Jane and her husband, Tony Law, lived on Williams Lake for nearly fifty years. Both were exceptional local artists who loved to travel in their "sketchmobile" and record the beauty around them. Many paintings of Williams Lake adorn the walls of local homes and others across the continent.

Tony was a founding member of the Williams Lake Conservation Company in 1968 and served as president for a time in the 1980s. Both supported the Company in many ways over the years and were made honorary members.

### WATER LEVELS AND QUALITY

The WLCC monitors Colpitt and Williams Lake for bacterial contamination every summer. We are happy to report E.coli counts have continued to be well below the level that poses a risk for swimming for both lakes.

We continue to be concerned about potential damage to the water quality of Williams Lake caused by run-off from Williams Lake Road and the new Ravenscraig development and playing field. We are currently in discussions with HRM concerning two issues: 1) the repair of the system that filters water flowing from the settling ponds and storm drains along Williams Lake Road into the lake and 2) responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the two settling ponds on the north side of the road.

The Centre for Sustainable Watersheds situated in a small village, Portland on the Rideau, has published a book, ***On the Living Edge, Your Handbook for Waterfront Living***. While the book was written for Ontario many of the tips and ideas can apply to freshwater lakes everywhere including Williams Lake. Many of us think that our urban property goes to the water's edge where the lake begins. This book reminds the reader that what we do several feet from the edge of the lake can have an impact on the water quality and wildlife habitat.

Topics include:

- Preventing and managing shoreline erosion
- Using native plants on your shoreline
- Protecting your water quality
- Caring for your yard and garden
- Recreation and boating
- Co-existing with wildlife
- Environment-friendly products
- Building by water, including information on docks

You can purchase a copy for \$20.00 plus shipping and handling by e-mail at: [info@watersheds.ca](mailto:info@watersheds.ca). Their website is [www.watersheds.ca](http://www.watersheds.ca).

## ICE OUT

We all wait for signs of Spring. One of the most significant in our area is the "ice-out" of Williams Lake. A local historian named Charles Rowlings started recording the "ice-out" in 1940. He was a resident on the Northwest Arm and owned the company "Rowlings Limited". It was in the business of dry and pickled fish provisions and also acted as customs brokers and steamship operators. In the early 1950s the record was passed on to Ken Hall and the Halls continue the recording today. Interestingly, the record does not support any trends of warming or cooling. The earliest the "ice-out" occurred was February 26<sup>TH</sup> in 1951 and the latest was April 20<sup>TH</sup> in 1950. This year the "ice-out" occurred on March 18<sup>TH</sup>. Soon it will be swimming time!



Colpitt / Williams Lake Area Map

## COLPITT LAKE WALK

Live in the area, but have never walked in to Colpitt Lake, the major source of water running into Williams Lake? Never seen the ecologically sensitive granite Barrens above Colpitt Lake and the effect of last year's fire? Now is a chance to get to know this part of the Williams Lake watershed a little better. Come and join us for a walk into Colpitt Lake to be held on Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

WLCC board member Melanie Dobson will lead the hike. Those wanting to take part should meet at 2 P.M. at the very end of Drysdale Road, in the new Governor's Brook Development. The trail is rough and requires walkers have a reasonable level of fitness. Sturdy, waterproof footwear is recommended.

## COLPITT LAKE BEAVERS

A surprising finding from our monitoring of Colpitt Lake last summer was an increase in the clarity of the water. Also, the lake level was significantly higher than in past years. Upon investigation we noted a bit of a blockage at the outflow to Williams Lake, sticks and debris that looked as if they might have become lodged there during some of the heavy rains at that time. A week later it was clear that this had been just the beginning of beaver-related damming. Impressive what those guys can do in a week. The beavers continued to reinforce the structure through the summer, enough to finally raise the lake by 2 feet. We initially were concerned about the impact since this flow from Colpitts represents one of the major inputs to Williams Lake. However, despite the beaver dam, the volume of water running down the stream was never significantly reduced. The main impact was a reduction in the rate at which Williams Lake would rise after any given rainstorm. In previous years we would see about a 3 cm rise 24-48 hrs after a 1 cm rainfall. With the slower release from Colpitts, the same rise was taking almost 4 days to peak. It may be helpful to have rainwater held for a longer period in Colpitt rather than rushing directly into Williams Lake where the greater surface area may result in a higher rate of loss from evaporation.

The Colpitt Lake beaver dam survived the winter but sometime in the first week of April was destroyed. We don't know if this was through an act of man or Mother Nature but the beavers are already hard at work replacing the structure. Given our ongoing concerns with low water levels in Williams Lake, maybe we should recruit the beavers to help us with the task of repairing our dam.

For updates on our dam, beaver activity and other matters related to the health of Williams Lake, please join us at our AGM.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009-2010

- Stewart Cameron • Redwood Avenue
- Marshall Conley • Williams Lake Road • 423-0501
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- Melanie Dobson • Wyndrock Drive • 477-0668
- Kathleen Hall • Hall's Road • 477-4159
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MEMBERSHIP FORM \$20. (\$80. FOR 4 YEARS)

To: WILLIAMS LAKE CONSERVATION COMPANY, % A. von Maltzahn  
15 Wenlock Grove, Halifax, NS B3P 1P6



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Heather Watts's history of the Williams Lake area is \$5 when renewing or joining, additional copies are \$10 each.

Williams Lake Conservation Company • A registered non-profit community organization founded in 1968.