

WILLIAMS LAKE

May, 2016

CONSERVATION COMPANY

www.williamslakecc.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 6 AT 7:00 P.M.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM SPRY CENTRE
10 KIDSTON ROAD

EVERYONE WELCOME

The WLCC is a non-profit volunteer organization. We welcome everyone who shares the WLCC's mandate to preserve the health of Williams Lake to come to our AGM.

Come to the AGM to learn about Williams Lake and to discuss what we need to do to see a major portion of the watershed become a protected urban wilderness. We will have a shortened meeting followed by an opportunity to socialize and discuss the Shaw/NCC proposal.

HALIFAX GREEN NETWORK PLAN

At this time last year we were encouraging our members to engage in the public consultations for the Halifax Green Network plan. Fortunately, many came out to the session at the Captain William Spry Centre and helped put Williams Lake and the Backlands on the map! This was followed by further meetings, one between the Backlands Coalition (of which WLCC is a member) and an HRM planner working on the Green Network Plan, and the second, attended by representatives of the WLCC and other stakeholder groups making up the coalition.

A wide selection of materials about Williams Lake and the Backlands was provided to the HRM planners. This material can be found on the Backlands Coalition website (<http://backlandscollection.ca/>) under the heading 'cultural landscapes'. Of particular interest is a thesis written by Rachel Nicholls titled, 'Exploring Halifax's Industrial Heritage: The Williams Lake Historical Corridor'.

The public was then invited to attend a presentation in March and the revised maps were released. A final opportunity was given for public input in May. Due to technical difficulties some people encountered with the Green Plan web page, two tutorials were held in the community and many again took the time to express their views and identify key aspects of the lake and its watershed.

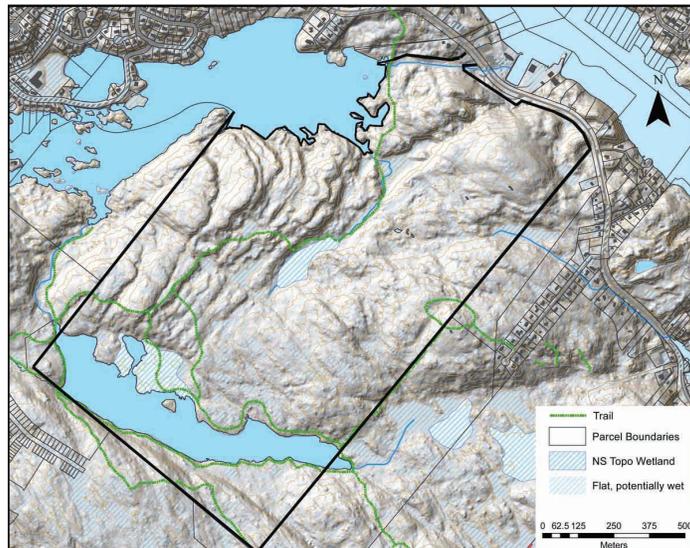
The consultant for the Green Network Plan (02 Planning and Design) has created maps of the Halifax region using some 74 data layers to identify natural areas where the greatest number of values overlap, including habitats, drinking water, tourism vistas and unique landscape features.

Although the Green Network Plan has not yet been finalized it is fair to say that Williams Lake and the Backlands have been recognized as a highly valued area in HRM.



Painted turtle, Williams Lake - Photo courtesy of Leslie Randall

COME TO THE AGM AND HELP
MAKE THIS A WILDERNESS PARK



Clayton Developments property, subject of the recent proposal to Halifax Council by The Nature Conservancy of Canada and The Shaw Group Limited. The property is outlined in black on a lidar topology map showing wetlands, water courses and hiking trails from a REPORT to the Williams Lake Conservation Co., Dec. 2013. Map courtesy of Dr. Patricia Manuel, School of Planning, Dalhousie University (*Hill and Patriquin, 2014*).

THE SHAW GROUP AND NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA (NCC)

Many of you may already be aware that The Shaw Group has teamed up with the NCC in relation to a new proposal to protect a significant portion of the Backlands for "**Halifax's finest urban nature experience**".

On Tuesday, April 26, a presentation was made to Halifax Regional Council, proposing "**a mutually beneficial, three-way partnership for the protection of the Williams-Colpitt Lake site**" – nearly 162 hectares of wilderness lands (see map) currently owned by The Shaw Group, which is the parent company of Clayton Developments.

"We have provided an evaluation and a discounted purchase price for the lands," Allan Shaw, representing The Shaw Group, told Council. "We have listened to what the public has to say and the importance of these lands to the (city's) future green network."

Meanwhile, the NCC is offering to bring "financial investment, expertise and perspective to the establishment of one of Canada's pre-eminent urban wilderness parks." Speaking for the NCC, its Nova Scotia Program Director Craig Smith, described the lands as "a diamond at our doorstep".

Come to the AGM to discuss what we need to do to make this plan a reality.

WEBSITE

To find out more about the WLCC and our activities, check us out on Facebook:

Williams-Lake-Conservation-Company

or on our website: www.williamslakecc.org

Among other items you will find links to colour versions of the newsletters and a printable membership form.

ANOTHER NEW RECORD

A record of the date the ice leaves Williams Lake every year has been kept since 1940. Last year's 'ice out' on April 30 was the latest yet. The previous record was April 28 in 1972.

This year another record was broken when 'ice out' occurred on February 25. The previous record for the earliest date was February 26 in 1950.

The loons took their time this year, not arriving until April 25.

ROAD SALT ISSUE

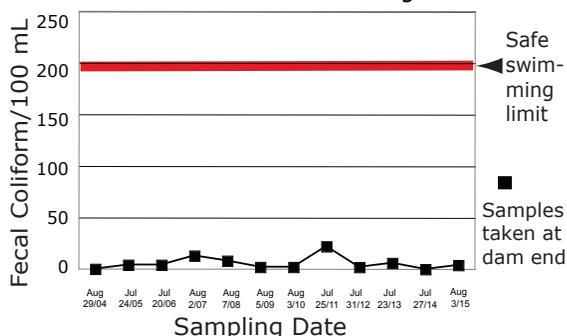
In January 2015, the Halifax Department of Energy and Environment reversed its long-standing policy of using sand and grit instead of salt on roads around Williams Lake. The sudden change was made with no public consultation. Long-time residents could have explained that salting had been discontinued in the mid-90's when, as a result of lake water testing results and much lobbying by the WLCC, it was agreed that lake water quality would only be protected if the side roads closest to the lake were sanded, not salted

Representatives of the WLCC met with Halifax staff on two occasions in 2015 to provide historic and scientific information that application of salt is damaging to fresh water lakes with Williams Lake being particularly vulnerable. A second winter has now passed and while we are all grateful that it was less brutal, the city refused to reverse its decision on salting streets near the lake. Halifax terminated its lake water quality-monitoring program in 2010, so they have no mechanism for detecting damage that ensues from this change of policy.

The WLCC has been monitoring the quality, chemical and microbiological (see below), of Colpitt and Williams Lakes since 1980, and will continue to do so. To assess the impact of road salting in the winter of 2014-15, Dr. David Patriquin undertook a more in-depth analysis of the pH and salt content of water in the two lakes this past December for the WLCC. Full details can be found in his report on our website. His data indicates Williams Lake is already being adversely affected by salt input and recommends a return to gritting and also raises concerns that run-off into Governor's Brook and Colpitt Lake is negatively impacting water quality in the watershed.

In a CBC interview earlier this year, Trevor Harvey, acting supervisor of HRM Winter Operations, and Cameron Deacoff, environmental protection officer, stated that because of the concerns raised by residents and the study they are open to further discussions.

WLCC Williams Lake Water Testing 2004-15



MEMBERSHIP FORM \$20. (\$80. FOR 4 YEARS)

To: WILLIAMS LAKE CONSERVATION COMPANY, % Melanie Dobson
11 Wyndrock Drive, Halifax, NS B3P 1R8

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____



Bird reflection - Early morning Williams Lake
Photo courtesy of Jenny Whyte

COME JOIN THE WLCC

The Board needs your input and also new members. Is your area represented on the Board? The WLCC depends on its volunteers. Please contact any of the Board listed below to volunteer or suggest a name. We encourage you to attend the AGM and look forward to seeing you on Monday, June 6th.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-2016

- Tony Bebbington • Wenlock Grove
- Paul Cashman • Litchfield Crescent • 902-431-0553
- Murray Coolican • Birchview Drive
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- Robin Whyte • Wyndrock Drive • 902-477-6744

WLCC MEMBERSHIP

WLCC membership is \$20 per household and can be paid at the AGM or by returning the attached form.

(The form is also available through our website at www.williamslakeecc.org)

Heather Watts's history of the Williams Lake area is \$5 when renewing or joining, additional copies are \$10 each. The mandate of the WLCC is to protect the health of Williams Lake. **Everyone who shares this goal is welcome as a member!**

