

Williams Lake Dam Association

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September 12, 2020

Dear Neighbours and Friends of Williams Lake,

RE: LET'S GET LOUD! Williams Lake needs your help!

Every summer, for a number of years, the water level of Williams Lake has been getting lower and lower. This summer, the lake is quite literally disappearing.

A team of interested citizens has been formed to try to bring attention to the fact that Williams Lake water levels need to be restored, but we can't do this alone. We need you!

The Shaw Wilderness Park was secured with six million dollars in financial investments from the Halifax Regional Municipality, the federal and provincial governments, our community and corporations and individuals. Williams Lake is a valuable part of this infrastructure and investment. Let's get this asset up to value!

When the Shaw Wilderness Park was created, Williams Lake was promoted as a critical piece of this urban wilderness park. Today, most swimming areas are difficult to reach, and the once beautiful shoreline has been reduced to boulders or mudflats. The public access at the west end of the lake for kayaks and canoes is a mud flat and inaccessible.

Yes, there has been little rain. However, if you look at the lakes around Williams Lake, they may be down a foot or two, but Williams Lake is down by over 5 feet! The dam is out of the water, but a substantial amount of water continues to flow beneath the dam into the Northwest Arm.

We need to act and bring attention to this NOW with time, energy and dollars to restore water levels to maintain the park's greatest asset, which is the lake itself.

There are enough people in this community with the same mindset to make this as a priority!

Let's get loud! Our voices will make the difference! Please, invest in this effort, by writing letters, calling and sending emails to our leaders in government.

The election for a new Regional Council is October 17. Please help us to make sure the restoration of Williams Lake is debated by candidates for office and then Zoom in for the debates!

Below are talking points you may consider for your own letters as well as contact information to some of the departments and people of influence, to drive this task forward.

Please, for the health of Williams Lake, and all the joys it brings, use your voices to get summer water levels restored. Request that HRM promptly undertake repairs to the area of the dam so that the water levels are restored to those of decades past.

With the greatest of appreciation,
Margo Kerr and the William's Lake Dam Association
Mr. Murray Coolican – President of the WLCC
Catherine Vaughan
Jeff Purcell

“Supporting the restoration of water levels from decades past.”

Send your letters or emails to the following leaders:

Brendon McGuire, MLA
349 Herring Cove Road. Suite C.
Halifax, N.S.
B3V 1R
Phone: 902-444-0147
Fax: 902-444-8941
brendan@brendanmaguire.ca

Steve Adams, District 11
Founders Square,
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5
902-477-0627
adamss@halifax.ca

Shawn Cleary
902-479-6746
shawn.cleary@halifax.ca

Mayor Mike Savage
Phone: 902.490.4010
Email: mayor@halifax.ca
Street Address: 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax
Mailing Address: PO Box 1749, Halifax, NS
B3J 3A5

Premier Steven McNeil
902-424-6600
One Government Place
1713 Barrington St.
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2A4
premier@novascotia.ca
Fax: 902-424-7648

HRM aldermanic candidates are available at Halifax.ca

Hon. Ian Rankin,
Minister of Lands and Forests,
902-424-5935
Email: mindnr@novascotia.ca

Hon. Gordon Wilson,
Minister of Environment
902-424-3736
minister.environment@novascotia.ca

Hon. Lloyd Hines,
Minister of Natural Resources
902-424-0532
TIRMIN@novascotia.ca

Andy Filmore, M.P.
902-426-8691
andy@novascotia.ca



Questions:

Have you approached anyone in government before now about the water levels and do you have a written copy of any of those interactions? If so, please include that with your letter.

Do you have any evidence or concerns about the long-term sustainability of the current wildlife that lives in and on Williams Lake?

How long have those of you who have lived on or near the lake been here and what is your history with the water levels?

Points of Interest:

In 2004, the WLCC hired YMCL Engineering Limited to assess the dam and provide recommendations. Their report confirmed that water was leaking under the dam at a “fairly high” rate, and the construction of a new one was recommended.

There is a substantial amount of water still leaking out of our lake into the Arm. Our own recent observations, and that previous engineering study, indicate that over 1 million gallons per day leak under the dam during seasonal low water level conditions. It is not even this quantity that is the biggest concern, but rather the far greater amount that leaks out when the lake is still high. If that flow to the ocean was just reduced, a resulting huge volume of water could be saved in our lake to keep the levels more normal through the drier summer.

The leakage under the dam is the single biggest impact to our lake level. The lack of water inflow, lack of rainfall, and evaporation are all issues, but William’s Lake would be like other lakes around here if it was just that. Yes, our lake is shallow, but so is Frog Pond for example, and its water level is not down by more than 5 feet!

Let’s fix the one thing that we can fix...The Dam!

If you have pictures of our lake that show the dramatic water drop please include them.

Halifax Regional Municipality invested \$4million in the Park. The federal and provincial governments each contributed \$1 million to this unique wilderness infrastructure asset. Community, corporate and individual donors added \$1.3 million. The communications material for the Shaw Wildlife Park had people diving off of rocks and canoeing. The lake is vital to the park.

The current President of the WLCC, Murray Coolican, is on the new team to help us move forward with the dam restoration.

With the opening of the new Park, this Spring there was a big increase in the number of canoes and kayaks that accessed the lake from the West end at Acorn Avenue. That access is now a mud flat. The causeway on Wyndrock was bumper to bumper lined with cars of fishermen and those using the lake in the Spring.

One advantage to fixing the dam now is that a road has been built directly to the access point because of the new entrance to the Shaw Wilderness Park.

What are we asking for?

We request that HRM promptly undertake repairs to the area of the dam so that the water levels are restored to those of decades past.