

WILLIAMS LAKE

October, 2020

CONSERVATION COMPANY

www.williamslakecc.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 7:00 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING,

WLCC WEBSITE

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

On Facebook: [facebook.com/WLCCHalifaxNS](https://www.facebook.com/WLCCHalifaxNS)

On our Website: www.williamslakecc.org

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.

JOIN US ONLINE

For a review of our AGM visit

<https://williamslakecc.org/2020/10/30/wlcc-2020-agm-presentations>

WHERE HAS THE WATER GONE?



Williams Lake Road end of Williams Lake, Aug 12, 2015 (left) compared to Aug 6, 2020 (right)

Wyndrock Drive causeway area on Sept 9, 2020

SAVE THE LAKE - FIX THE DAM!

By: Cathy Vaughan, WLCC Executive
Margo Kerr, Williams Lake Dam Association (WLDA)

The front page of the Chronicle Herald featured a dramatic photo of the mud flats on Williams Lake on September 11. The accompanying article outlined the five-foot reduction in water levels. That's when the action broke out!

Community activist, Margo Kerr, formed the Williams Lake Dam Association (WLDA) and began working with Cathy Vaughan, a member of the WLCC executive. Within days, a public education letter "Let's Get Loud" described the water level issues and asked supporters of Williams Lake to write municipal, provincial and federal representatives to ask for action to repair the leakage under the dam.

The letter was posted on WLDA's Face book, the WLCC's web site and was hand-delivered house-to-house in all the surrounding areas. We have met with Shawn Cleary and Brendan Maguire to brief them on the issues of the loss of water. Both are on board and keen to help us to bring the Williams Lake water level issues to HRM and the Province.

CBC TV, Global and CTV followed up on Margo's press release with coverage on their newscasts and brought the needed attention to the low water levels in the lake and the need to stop water leakage under the dam.

Last year HRM worked with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to create the Shaw Wilderness Park with support from federal, provincial, and municipal governments plus many local businesses and residents. Williams Lake is a vital feature of the city-owned Shaw Wilderness Park. Williams Lake is also an essential recreational and wildlife asset for our community and for all of HRM.

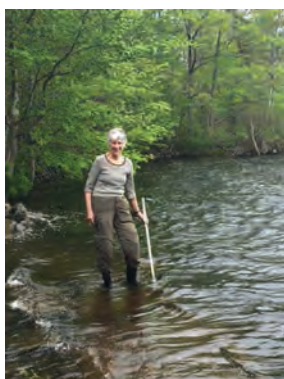
The low water levels have limited public access to the lake. The boat launch at the end of Acorn Road is a mud flat. Public swimming areas have been affected as has the wildlife habitat of the lake.

Folks who love the lake need to take action! Contact your local councillors to get the Williams Lake dam on their political agenda. You can sign an on-line petition to save the lake by going to [Facebook.com Williams Lake Dam Association](https://www.facebook.com/WilliamsLakeDamAssociation). Use the blue button "Sign Up" and fill in the petition. Your voice counts.

If you want to "Get Loud" - join us!!!

Cathy Vaughan – cathyevan@hotmai.com
Margo Kerr – kerr@eastlink.ca

MORE WATER GOING OUT - WILLIAMS LAKE DAM IN NEED OF REPAIR



Typical level at dam in spring - here water is 15 cm above top of dam on June 16, 2019

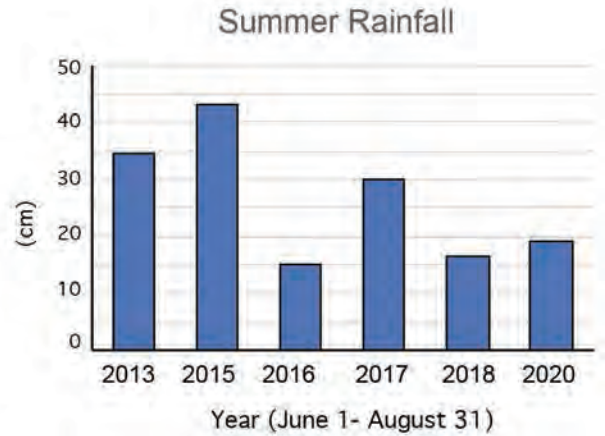
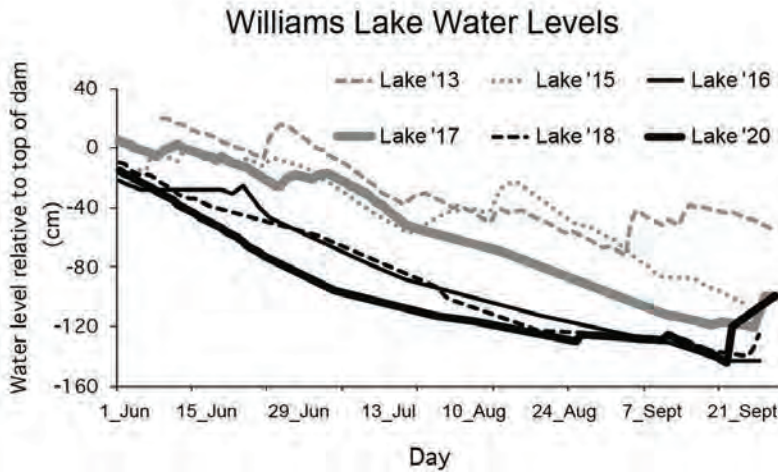


Same view as at left but here, on Sept. 10, 2020, lake level is 130 cm below top of dam, water's edge 5 meters in front of dam



Despite dam being high and dry, as seen here on Sept 10, 2020, water is still flowing out underneath and down the stream on back side

LESS WATER COMING IN - RECENT DRY SUMMERS COMPROMISE LAKE LEVELS



This past summer was one of the hottest on record for Nova Scotia. This, combined with negligible rainfall, resulted in low levels in many lakes, Williams Lake included. This pattern may become more frequent with global climate change, making it more critical than ever to take steps to prevent excess loss of water from the watershed.

LESS WATER STILL IF UNDEVELOPED LAND IN WATERSHED IS NOT PROTECTED

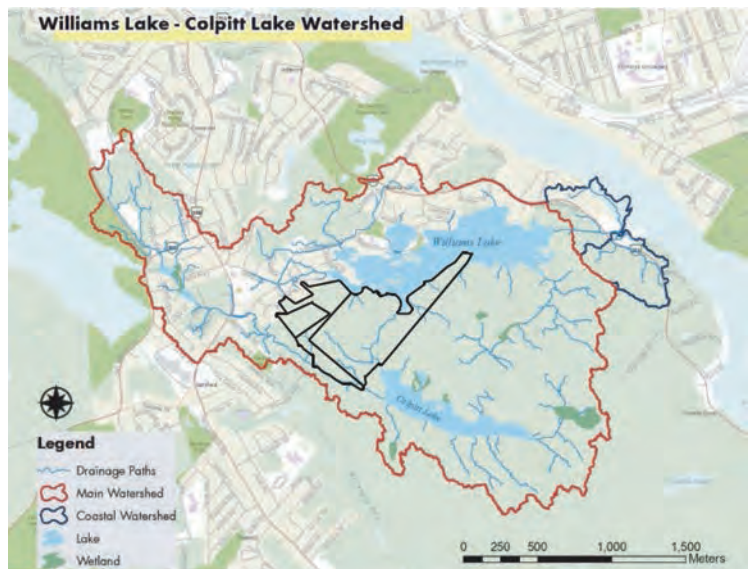
CONCERN OVER LANDS FOR SALE AT WESTERN SIDE OF WILLIAMS LAKE

Late in 2019 a parcel of land at the west end of Williams Lake went on the market. The parcel consists of three pieces of land and the current owner is the Church of Christ. The largest piece is 100 acres and zoned urban reserve (UR). The other two pieces total 36 acres and are zoned Residential Development District (RDD). The UR designation would allow one house to be built whereas the RDD designation would allow duplexes with no requirement that HRM Council approve a dense development of this sort.

Councillor Shawn Cleary of District 9 introduced a motion to the Halifax and West Community Council on June 17 requesting that HRM staff prepare a report on a change in the zoning of the 36 acres from RDD to UR. The motion was unanimously passed by the Community Council and appears below:

“To recognize how inappropriate development is in this area, a large portion of one these properties is currently zoned urban reserve. Given the location on Williams Lake and the proximity to the newly created municipal Shaw Wilderness Park, the development of these lands put at risk the substantial investment that Halifax and the Nature Conservancy of Canada just made in creating a sustainable recreation facility. It also puts the water quality in Williams Lake at greater risk, which would further degrade the recreational value and biodiversity of Williams Lake and the Shaw Wilderness Park, as demonstrated in the Green Network Plan.”

The Williams Lake Conservation Company fully supports this proposed zoning change. Submissions have been made to HRM staff detailing the need to prevent development on these pieces of land. It is expected that the report will be tabled with the Community Council in the near future.



Three pieces of land recently put up for sale (outlined in black)
Watershed map courtesy of Patrica Manuel

LAND FOR SALE IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF THE WILLIAMS LAKE/COLPITT LAKE WATERSHED

The land for sale contains the major stream that supplies water from Colpitt Lake to Williams Lake and has steep slopes and smaller water courses that supply rainfall run-off to both lakes and the stream. The land is bordered by Governor's Brook on its southern side, a major water supply for Colpitt Lake, and on the northern side has the only remaining undeveloped, and currently unprotected, portion of the Williams Lake shoreline. The Shaw Wilderness Park is immediately adjacent to the land for sale.

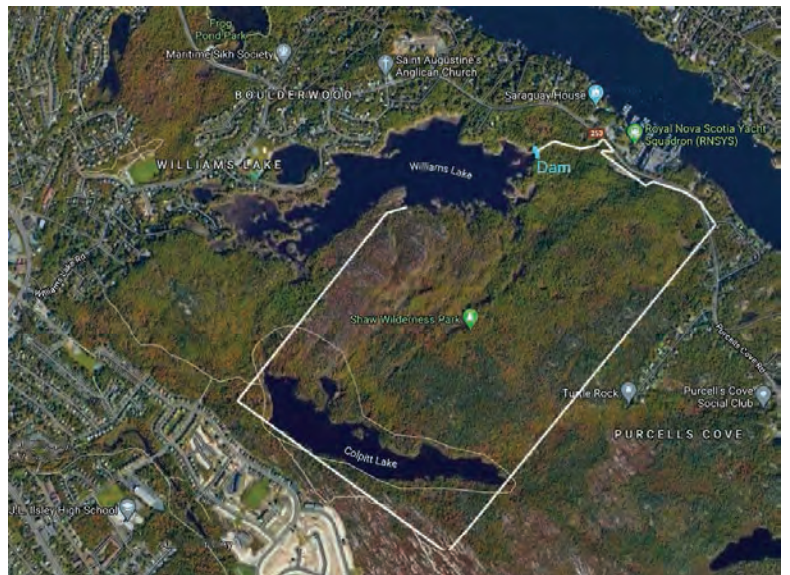


View of Colpitt Lake as seen near inflow from Governors Brook - Jul 30, 2020

THE SHAW WILDERNESS PARK IS NOW OPEN!

The Shaw Wilderness Park officially opened on January 20, 2020. There was to be an outdoor celebration sponsored by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) but plans were put hold because of Covid-19. The official entrance to the park is located at 2379 Purcell's Cove Road. There is a large parking lot directly across the road from the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron where the trailhead can be found.

The accessible trail (~300 metres) follows Lawson Creek, the stream running from Williams Lake into the Northwest Arm and leads to a gathering area at the east end of Williams Lake. From there a rougher root and rock trail marked with red reflector squares can be followed to Colpitt Lake (~ 2 km). There are many beautiful spots along the bays of both lakes and in the woods. Many people have been discovering and enjoying the park and we encourage all to don your hiking boots and hit the trail!



Entrance to Shaw Wilderness Park on Purcell's Cove Road and Trail to Lake



Members of the WLCC executive, Murray Coolican, Kathleen Hall and Nick Ross scout out the proposed route of the trail to the lake in July 2019 with Craig Smith (at right) who as the NS Program Director for NCC worked tirelessly to get the Shaw Park established .



The gathering area overlooking the lake

Thanks go to so many who have given generously to make the Shaw Wilderness Park a reality. The NCC has done a great job encouraging and overseeing this major initiative, making it a reality with support from foundations, the federal and provincial governments, HRM, and the public. A history of the park and how it came to exist can be found on the WLCC website at

<https://williamslakeecc.org/2020/05/19/halifaxs-new-shaw-wilderness-park/>

To learn more about the Shaw Wilderness Park, visit KeepHalifaxWild.ca

and see www.halifaxtrails.ca/shaw-wilderness-park/ or <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/canada/nova-scotia/shaw-wilderness-park-trail> for trail information.

10-YEAR REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL PLAN (RP +10)

The WLCC has recently been active in requesting changes to the Regional Plan that would provide better protection for watersheds and green spaces in HRM. The current Regional Plan was approved by Council in 2006 and will remain in effect until 2031 (25 years). There is a mandatory review every 5 years. The first review (started in 2011 and approved by Council in October, 2014) resulted in some important changes. This included the addition of a section mandating a Greenbelt for the municipality. HRM staff was tasked with creating the policy which is called the Halifax Green Network Plan and this was passed by Council in August, 2018.

The 10 year review of the plan is now underway. Members of the WLCC executive submitted a report on behalf of the Backlands Coalition (of which the WLCC is a member group) and met with HRM planners. At this time HRM staff is preparing a report titled, 'Themes and Directions'. Once this is released there will be further consultation with the public.

The WLCC submission focused on requesting changes to the existing plan in key areas. These would include new zoning designations to protect the land around Williams Lake from further development, adoption of the Green Network Plan and an increase to the existing protection of Riparian Buffers.

If anyone is interested in discussing this topic or becoming involved please contact us through the WLCC website and tune into our AGM.

True Common Wealth
By: Nick Ross

Williams Lake is and has always been a sanctuary for wilderness and our community. The Shaw Wilderness Park we all now enjoy is a testament to its worth not just as a wilderness sanctuary but as a sanctuary for our peace of mind.

No one would dispute that these are difficult times affecting us all. We are all measuring the reserves of the energy we need to push back against the normal uncertainties and now the uncertainty and menace of the pandemic. Let's look for a moment at how important our urban park is to people and families whose reserves are slim and who are very taxed under normal circumstances.

My family and I grew up in Armdale, often on the edge of poverty. For many reasons we never felt the full sting of that vulnerability. Loving neighbours and reserves of forest and lakes that are free to all can protect and restore people as well as the land.

I did not have to be rich to go anytime I wanted to hike and swim at Williams Lake. And as I would hike to my favourite swimming spot, I would always see many others at other spots doing the same thing, taking advantage of a great luxury that was there for all of us, for free.

I would see young families, senior citizens and neighbours of every description. When the disadvantaged young, the elderly and new families lose all contact with nature, life becomes so much harder for them. They often have to live in neighbourhoods that are absolutely urban, with high population density and no green spaces. How many youthful bad decisions have been avoided and how many families at their wits end have spent an afternoon at the lake and had it stave off disaster and come away with renewed strength to carry on, or change their lives forever?

We have a mixed economic neighbourhood surrounding Williams Lake. We still have a culture that welcomes everyone to the wild. Just as we are all taking precautions and making sacrifices during this pandemic to protect the most vulnerable from harm, so too are we building a charitable reserve within the Shaw Wilderness Park.

A rich country like ours should show its wealth in its character and in its compassion. We have done just that by preserving Williams Lake for all.

When I am at Williams Lake now, I am inspired by its beauty but I am also moved by our legacy of caring. You feel warmth in the water and the sun shining through the woods. You feel the warmth of love in our stewardship and kindness to each other.

Thank you Williams Lake, the wilderness park and all who support it. Solace and hope still live there and are waiting to restore you. I believe, this is what we've all accomplished together and keep in trust now and for the future.



Nick Ross and friends spent summers swimming at the Williams Lake dam. *Photo courtesy of Cathy Vaughan*

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 virtually on Wed, Oct. 28th.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-2020

- Paul Cashman • Litchfield Crescent • 902-431-0553
- Murray Coolican • Birchview Drive • 902-329-5535
- Melanie Dobson • Wyndrock Drive • 902-477-0668
- Deborah Hall • Hall's Road • 902-479-7241
- Kathleen Hall • Hall's Road • 902-477-4159
- Martha Leary • Redwood Avenue • 902-420-1520
- Leslie Randall • Wyndrock Drive
- Nick Ross • Kirk Rd
- Cathy Vaughan • Litchfield Crescent • 902-800-0757
- Anne von Maltzahn • Wenlock Grove • 902-477-3353
- Robin Whyte • Wyndrock Drive • 902-477-6744

Philip Howard • Webmaster • Wyndrock Drive

WLCC MEMBERSHIP

WLCC membership is \$20 per household. To become a member or renew your membership go to: <https://williamslakeecc.org/membership/> and follow the cues or complete and return the form below. Please consider a donation to keep our work going.

The mandate of the WLCC is to protect the health of Williams Lake. **Everyone who shares this goal is welcome as a member!**

MEMBERSHIP FORM (\$20 PER HOUSEHOLD)

To: WILLIAMS LAKE CONSERVATION COMPANY,
% Deborah Hall, 9 Hall's Road, Halifax, NS B3P 1P4

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP : \$ _____ Optional DONATION: \$ _____

