

Draft Minutes of the Williams Lake Conservation Company (WLCC)
Annual General Meeting – 17 June 2025
Captain William Spry Community Centre

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

President Murray Coolican called the meeting to order, gave a warm welcome to all attendees, and acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq, Walastekwiyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy peoples. He noted that the Shaw Wilderness Park "roots and rocks" path, leading from the dam into the Backlands, now has an official name - Etu'qamikejk Trail, which in the Mi'kmaw language means "place where two sides meet". A full explanation and map is available on the Backlands Coalition website.

Approval of the Agenda

Murray Coolican called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Martha Leary so moved, the motion was seconded by Debbie Hall, and approved by all present.

Approval of the Draft Minutes of the 2024 AGM

Murray Coolican called for a motion to approve the Draft Minutes of the 2024 AGM. It was so moved by Melanie Dobson, seconded by Debbie Hall, and approved by all present.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Debbie Hall presented the report for the fiscal year running from June 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025. She provided details of the current WLCC bank balance of \$ 4,722.88 as of 31 May 2025, and a review of expenditures and income from membership, donations, and grants. The WLCC received a \$200 grant from the Captain William Spry Library and a \$50 donation from the Halifax Wildlife Association. A motion to approve the financial statement was put forward by Kathleen Hall and seconded by Martha Leary. There were no objections, and the Treasurer's Report was approved.

Nomination and Election of the Board for 2025-2026

Murray Coolican proposed acceptance of the current slate of board members. It was so moved by Debbie Hall, and seconded by Patricia Manuel. As there were no objections the Board, consisting of President Murray Coolican, Treasurer Debbie Hall and Secretary Leslie Randall, was elected for the coming year. Murray expressed the WLCC's interest in new members and volunteers to act as Directors on the Board. He offered words of appreciation for the help of local politicians: Brendan Maguire, Patty Cuttell and Shawn Cleary.

Williams Lake Dam Replacement Project

The project is being handled by Build Nova Scotia (Build NS). The WLCC has been working with them, and is grateful for the clear communication and accommodation to local concerns, especially regarding tree clearing, where they altered their schedule to lessen impact on nesting birds.

Murray introduced Jonathan Veale, Vice President, Strategic Infrastructure & Development at Build NS, who spoke briefly before providing an introduction to Denis Pellichero, Director of Engineering Strategic Infrastructure for Build NS, who outlined the scope and schedule of the project as well as displaying a map showing the proposed new dam structure. The tendering process is complete, but work can not begin until a variety of permits and consultations are approved. The 4 to 5 months of dam construction must be done between June 1st and the Fall, so will likely not start until 2026, followed by tree planting, restoration, and naturalization of the site.

Key points covered in the presentation and question period afterwards were:

- During construction HRM will issue public notices and media posts when the trail is closed.
- A cofferdam will hold back lake water to create a dry space for construction to begin.
- The design will incorporate a fish/eel ladder with resting ponds, and a controlled spillway.
- Public safety fencing around the dam will likely restrict access to the dam itself.
- A floating boom in the lake will mark how close swimmers can approach the dam.
- Injected perma-crete will prevent water flowing through fractured rock on the lake bottom.
- The water level of the lake will still vary somewhat, but should approach Springtime levels.
- The spillway will be built to handle a "100-year storm" and extraordinary rainfall amounts.

The presentation ended with Murray introducing HRM's Doug Reid, Planning Coordinator Parks & Recreation, who works with the WLCC on issues relating to the Shaw Wilderness Park.

HRM Regional Plan

Kathleen Hall provided a brief update on the Regional Plan, introduced councillor Patty Cuttell, and noted that an important public hearing will be held on Thursday June 19. Two crucial issues relating to property in the Backlands will be decided. The first involves a 9-acre parcel on Purcell's Cove Road which contains a path which historically provides direct access to the swimming rocks on Williams Lake. The second issue concerns land south of Oceanview Drive which, when developed, should maintain a riparian buffer of 30 metres and restrict development to no more than 100 metres from the road. Kathleen urged everyone to write letters to Clerks@Halifax.ca, to plan to attend the hearing, and to register to speak at the hearing.

New Business

Melanie Dobson reported on activities at Cunard Junior High school: the formation of a clean-up crew for the school property, and the completion of a teaching unit on nesting snapping turtles, an at-risk species. Martha Leary reminded those present that the Backlands Bird Team is looking for people to join. She briefly described the group's activities and noted that there is a sign-up sheet.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks, Murray Coolican noted that the WLCC survives through the efforts of its volunteers, including Board members. He encouraged anyone interested to get in touch about joining the WLCC as a volunteer on one of the many sub-committees, or to act as a Director on the Board.

Adjournment

Murray Coolican thanked all presenters and attendees for their ongoing interest in and support for the WLCC. He solicited a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melanie Dobson so moved, and it was seconded by Martha Leary. All were in agreement, and the meeting was adjourned.

Everyone enjoyed refreshments and baking supplied by Debbie Hall.