

# 2023 LNID Trustee Report

Our thanks goes out to Pam Mann as treasurer, Bill Kresowaty as secretary and, of course, Coral Brown for their help and support. The board would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the service that Sandie Wilson has given to the LNID over the past five years as trustee. Sandie's term as trustee ended early for personal reasons and her presence, advice and support will be missed. The remaining year of her term will be filled through mail-in ballot and by election at this year's AGM.

## Background:

There are only 2 Land Improvement Districts in BC, but we are included in Provincial regulations with Irrigation Districts (IDs) that provide water to 3 or more on one intake, such as a Community Well. As an Improvement District, the LNID is considered a local authority and is governed under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MoMAH). The LNID has specific regulations that must be followed and all Bylaws (operating taxes, meeting procedures) must be approved by the Ministry. We are a form of Government with direct access to taxation, but with a mandate for works/land improvement described as "drainage" in the 100 year old Water Act which still is our guide under the 2016 Water Sustainability Act.

We have held twelve meetings from May 2, 2022 to April 13, 2023.

## Ongoing Business:

### Lake Levels:

Between May 4th and May 15th, a sudden influx of water totalling 2.97 vertical ft. entered the lake, raising the lake level to 18.05 vertical feet. There is an additional 4 vertical ft of stored water in Upper Twin Lake. This was due to the sudden rise in temperatures and the rapid melting of the snowpack. As a result, a pre-emptive request for pumping was made to Ray Reilly who is a Senior Authorization Officer for

the province. As of May 15th (the printing of this report), we have not received authorization.

A request and decision to pump the lake is not made lightly. It was recommended in the 1973 Botham Report (based on the 1968 hydrometric marker installed in the lake) that water levels in the lake be maintained between 12.6 vertical ft. and 17.6 vertical ft. The treeline is at 18.5 vertical feet. When the water level reaches 19.5 vertical ft built infrastructure is threatened and in danger of flood. When looking at levels of flood, the board considers water that is covering land property, water that is threatening infrastructure and water that is threatening residents' homes. None of these are positive for the lake and its' residents. When water expands over land and then recedes back into the lake it takes with it debris, chemicals, fertilizer etc. Many residents do not have wells and get their water from the lake. Also at risk, are any wells or septic fields close to the water line.

The board cannot begin pumping without permission and consultation with Ray Reilly. Both his and the board's priorities are the protection and preservation of property and essential infrastructure. By the time the water reaches residents' homes, it is too late to begin pumping, Our pump can remove 1/8 of an inch of water from the lake daily, so it can be a judgement call on when pumping should start. Historically, certain percentages of snowpack have resulted in certain increases in water when the freshet comes in. Sometimes, the board will ask for permission to pump in order to create enough space to contain an expected increase. Sometimes that increase does not happen or sometimes it is more than anticipated. At no time does the board pump or not pump water to impact the aesthetics or any resident beaches.

The board must provide lake levels to the Water Authorization Officer, along with a rationale when a request is made. Often someone from the office will come to inspect and look over the lake. If, and when, permission is granted, we are given restrictions on how much we can pump. The board must provide daily lake levels weekly to let the Water Authorization Officer know we are complying. We are also tasked with monitoring water levels downstream in the Willowbrook area etc. to ensure we are not causing harm.

Many residents would prefer we pump sooner than later and some residents object to the pumping beginning sooner than they feel is necessary. The board takes everyone's views into consideration and gives equal weight to each opinion. As stated, our goal is

to try and prevent property damage if possible, and the advice and guidance of the Water Authorization Officer is the determining factor in making the decision.

### **Water Quality Testing:**

Twin Lake is on a list for the 2023 Govt. funding of lake water chemical testing in 3 different lobes of Twin Lake several times during ice off. This is a level 2 lake monitoring and will test for over a hundred different components in the lake to assess water quality. This is a direct result of Shawna Willman's faithful bi-weekly Sechi Disk clarity and Dissolved O2 testing from ice on to ice off. Thanks goes to Shawna for her continued dedication and support.

### **Voting Rights:**

Aiken S Ranch properties have been paying taxes equivalent to other individual property owners over the years but an issue had been raised with regards to their voting rights at the AGM for trustees. The board had asked the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to review their status and it was determined that a legal opinion was required. The board referred the issue to a lawyer who specializes in the area of municipal law and we have received an opinion that the shareholder is an owner and should have a right to vote.

### **Going Forward:**

#### **Freedom of Information Requests:**

Over the past year to eighteen months, the board has had an increased number of requests for information, documents and reports through the Freedom of Information Act. Some requests are fairly easy to honour, but some requests can be time consuming. Many other local authorities have paid staff to accommodate administrative requests and to carry out other duties. The LNID board does not want to increase the tax rate to accommodate the hiring of such administrative help, but it needs to be acknowledged that the board members are volunteers and their available time is limited. The board has decided to go ahead with a policy that will charge a fee for each Freedom of Information Request. This is in line with the policy of other

governmental bodies such as RDOS, the provincial government, etc. and permitted under the Freedom of Information Act. Once this policy is in place, a form will be added to the website to fill out each request and should be submitted along with payment. The board will also be preparing and passing a Fee Bylaw that will charge an hourly rate for carrying out searches, research, investigations into the more complex requests. These fees (along with others such as reimbursement for photocopying etc.) will be used to compensate those other than trustees for their time or possibly hire outside help to complete the task.

### **LNID Five-year Vision Plan:**

Vision Statement: To restore the natural outflow of Twin Lake and enhance the degraded wetland that makes up the drainage area of lot 280.

As you know, Improvement Districts (IDs), of which Lower Nipit (Twin Lake ) Land Improvement is one, are not eligible for Government Infrastructure Grants, but they can apply for Conservation Project Grants or perhaps Gas Tax Grants when approved by the Regional District (RD). At the last AGM the idea of a vision for Twin Lakes was raised. The board would like to form a standing committee made up of residents who are interested in sharing ideas and engaging in a positive and meaningful way. It does not have to be limited to LNID members but could include the outlying community.

The board sees the challenge of solving the water draining problem as two-fold. The first challenge is installing a gravity feed outlet pipe using the 2019 Dobson Report as a guide. This would involve getting biological and archaeological assessments, quotes for horizontal drilling and materials, pursue grant funding options and confirming Park Rill drainage upgrades. The second challenge is ensuring all downstream residents are not impacted by our flood mitigation, *The board has been considering the option of working towards creating a wetland in Lot 280 as a way of storing excess water. This is at the early brainstorming stage and would involve the participation of the Nature Trust and possibly other organizations. The water stored would not be available to us to retrieve to replenish the lake (although it is presumed it will improve the groundwater), but it might be possible to use this strategy to meet the second challenge.*

By separating this project from the LNID, it could be possible to receive some conservation grants and other funding. Please note, this is a very tenuous idea and very much in the beginning stages of exploration and as such has not been brought to the board for a decision or formal planning. Ideally, the project would not be carried out under the LNID umbrella and as such we would incur no expense or liability.

Preliminary steps would include establishing grant funding options, engaging a hydrogeologist, designing and building water retention structures and establishing a study to monitor wetland ecology.

We would also want to establish a sustainable water monitoring programme and continue the lake monitoring programme with the guidance of BCLSS. Steps would include lobbying for a third groundwater monitoring well near Trout Lake, using information from Data logger to create a GIS mapping layer and requesting water monitoring data from the Twin Lakes Golf Resort wells.

### **LNID Website:**

The LNID website is our primary source of communication, containing information including the budget, LNID board meeting minutes, upcoming events, water reports, Twin Lake history and more. We are also starting to add some archival information such as all the bylaws passed by the different boards over the years. The URL is [www.twinlake.ca](http://www.twinlake.ca)

Please feel free to email us at [lnidcttee@gmail.com](mailto:lnidcttee@gmail.com).

Respectfully Submitted by the May 2022 – May 2023 Board of the Lower Nipit (Twin Lake) Land Improvement District. Trustees: Glenda Stewart-Smith, Dave Hetherington, Director: Coral Brown, Treasurer: Pam Mann and Secretary: Bill Kresowaty