



SOUTHEAST VIEW



NORTHWEST VIEW



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Well, this has been a challenging year for everyone with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Lodge closing for construction on the water treatment plant upgrade. As sad as this is, we must all remember this will end soon, and the facility will re-open once again to provide all of us with the enjoyment we dearly miss.

With regard to the lodge, the board has had an opportunity to review the design drawings and we can say the new facility will be remarkable and usable by all our guests and visitors.



The board still continues to meet on a regular basis to look at ways to improve things for all our guests and the surrounding area.

Last year's AGM was cancelled because of the virus, and we are actively working on scheduling our 2021 AGM in Calgary. We will keep everyone updated on a date, time, and location through our website.

In closing, I personally would like to thank

Jill Jamieson and the staff at the lodge for all their continued support and help over the year, and we look forward to seeing you when the lodge reopens.

Most of all, a special thank you to the Board for their continued support and help in making WWL an outstanding facility.

*Wayne Pelletier*  
WWLS President



# OUR MANDATE

To enhance the experience and promote the accessibility of the William Watson Lodge and outdoor environment for the benefit and enjoyment of persons with disabilities and senior citizens of Alberta.

*William Watson Lodge Society*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

William Watson Lodge Society  
Box 30344 Chinook Postal Outlet  
6455 McLeod Trail SE  
Calgary, Alberta, T2H 2W1  
✉ [info@williamwatsonlodgesociety.com](mailto:info@williamwatsonlodgesociety.com)  
🌐 [www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com](http://www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com)

## RESERVATIONS AND INQUIRIES

Cabins, RV Sites, Comfort Camping Site, and main Lodge Day Use. Call (RITE) toll-free 310-0000, then 403-591-7227

## VOLUNTEER

During the camping season, you may wish to volunteer as a camp host for up to two weeks. The William Watson Lodge front desk will provide the duties of a camp host upon arrival. There are 13 full-service sites. One is set aside for the hosts. The Team Lead selects the hosts.

## GIFTS

Your membership and donations, as well as bequests or legacies, are gratefully received and appreciated.

Gifts may be made at the Lodge or through our contact address above.



## 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

What a different year it has been. March 15, 2020 was when things changed for most of us. We stayed home, wore protective masks when out, sanitized our hands until we wondered if we could possibly sanitize anymore, learned to navigate our way around technology, and scaled back the size of any celebrations of life or loss. It will forever be the year of enormous change. But we have learned to adapt and thrive despite all that the COVID-19 restrictions have placed on us.

As a result of all the change, WWLS had to postpone and then cancel our 2020 AGM. It was a difficult decision to make, but safe health measures prevailed, and we wanted to ensure, first and foremost, the safety of all our members and board members. We missed seeing everyone and we hope we will be able to meet at the 2021 AGM and catch up. Please watch the WWLS website, [www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com](http://www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com), for more information on the 2021 AGM when it becomes available.

## 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2021 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June 26, 2021. This date is subject to change pending any restrictions due to COVID-19. The location of the AGM has yet to be determined. Please watch the WWLS website at [www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com](http://www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com) for more information closer to the date. We thank you for your understanding.

# 2018-2020 BUSINESS PLAN UPDATES



Since 1992, the volunteer board of WWLS has raised funds and supported numerous initiatives to improve the level of access and activity at the Lodge. Over the years, the Society has been responsible for the gazebo over the fire pit, the Comfort Camping unit, and many smaller projects.

Based on regular discussion with our members, the Society has prioritized the following items for the 2018-2020 Business Plan. Due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the William Watson Lodge was closed. The Provincial government approved the demolition of the existing main lodge due to structural concerns. It is to be replaced with the designs in this newsletter. All items in the business plan that were not completed by the closure date were put on hold. The remaining items listed below are still in the business plan and will be reviewed when the new facility is opened.

## 1. Accessible Games Room

Options include ping-pong table, shuffleboard, and other activities in the lodge: \$20,000

**Project Update:** Shuffleboard donated and in use. Replacement of the main lodge under construction. Project on hold.

## 2. Accessible RV Trailer Ramp

Includes ramp access, connections, skirting, and equipment as needed: \$13,000

**Project Update:** New awning installed at a cost of \$2,600, and balance of project to be installed and completed in spring 2021, in time for 2021 camping season.

## 3. Emergency notification system for deaf and hard of hearing guests

Portable systems are available on loan to alert deaf and hard of hearing individuals of an emergency and someone at the cabin door: \$5,000

**Project Update:** Replacement of the main lodge under construction. Project on hold.

## 4. Guest computer station, allowing guests to check emails, weather reports and news.

**Project Update:** Replacement of the main lodge under construction. Project on hold.

# LODGE REPORT

What a year! We started the year welcoming guests and planning for a wonderful winter season of outdoor recreation. By late February, we heard rumblings of a contagious virus spreading across the globe. March brought much more clarity to the pandemic, with William Watson Lodge closing its doors March 13. Along with our broader community, Alberta Parks staff were working to incorporate new guidelines and protocols, including ways of working and living with COVID-19. By April, Alberta Parks had moved to a local state of emergency, and closed access to parking lots and trailheads in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. By May, we learned that our plan for rebuilding the Day Lodge was approved. Celebration ensued, and we began the redirection of our work to prepare the site for demolition.

In June, Alberta Parks moved into a phase of opening campgrounds. We worked to get the approval to open William Watson Lodge for a limited engagement in July. We were relatively successful, and welcomed guests back to site for 4 weeks. It was heartwarming to welcome guests old and new to our incredible facility.

During August, we completed the move out of the Day Lodge, and the storing of all equipment, from caretaking and maintenance to administration. By September, work commenced on the wastewater treatment plant, closing of utilities to the Lodge, and the eventual demolition of the building. Although sad to see the mighty William Watson Lodge go, we are excited about its next iteration. This fall, Scott Builders, the construction company responsible for the Day lodge rebuild, was pleased to work in an excellent weather window. With little snow to hamper their efforts, construction continues on schedule.

William Watson Lodge staff have been fantastic throughout all of the changes and developments. It has created much work disruption and uncertainty. All staff have found new temporary work duties through to the end of construction. Folks have landed well and continue with their own professional growth and learning.

The Lodge staff wishes everyone a safe and healthy year.

Stay tuned!

Sincerely,  
*Jill Jamieson*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2019 – 2020

President	Wayne Pelletier
Treasurer	Farhood Rahnama
Secretary	Anne Godsman
Director	Donna Fox
Director	Peter Cosentino
Director	Jody Cowan
Director	Dorothy Praglowski
Director	Jack Smart
Director	Walter Fox
Director	Leah Patmore
Director	John Perdue

## TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Team Lead	Jill Jamieson
Advisor/Staff	Gwen Ross-Cieslak

## LEAVING A LEGACY

A number of bequests and donations were made to the William Watson Lodge Society this past year. We would like to sincerely thank all contributors.

Please know that your donations are appreciated and will go toward projects that will enhance the experience of guests and visitors of the Lodge while leaving a wonderful legacy of your loved ones.

Planned charitable donations need not be complicated. In many cases, a simple line in your Will is sufficient. As a charitable organization, the William Watson Lodge Society can also issue charitable donation receipts.

For additional information on planned charitable giving, you could speak with your family, lawyer, accountant, financial planner, insurance agent, or even the WWLS.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## AUDITED BALANCE SHEET YEAR-END, MARCH 31, 2020

ASSETS	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
Bank Operating Account	154,375
Casino Account	46,298
Tangerine Savings	103,850
<b>TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts</b>	<b>304,523</b>
Other Assets	
Account Receivable	0
GST Receivable	1,600
Interest Receivable	0
Prepaid Expenses	0
<b>TOTAL Other Assets</b>	<b>1,600</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>306,123</b>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
LIABILITIES	
Other Liabilities	
Account Payable	0
Deferred Revenue	37,241
Recycle Program	3
<b>TOTAL Other Liabilities</b>	<b>37,244</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>37,244</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>	<b>268,879</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>306,123</b>

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2020

#### Cash and Cash Equivalents \$304,522.

Operating account \$154,374 and Savings account \$103,849.

#### Deferred Revenue (Casino Account) \$46,298.

Deferred Revenue includes Alberta Gaming and liquor Commission (Casino) funds (\$37,240).

#### STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES HIGHLIGHTS:

##### Donations:

General donations \$45,805 and memberships \$1,645.

##### Expenditures:

Lodge and cabin improvements: \$29,648. (Leather sofa beds and chairs, double beds for some units, mattress toppers)

Office and computer: \$8,584. (Postage, newsletter, professional fees, and general office expenses).

Prepared by Masone and Company (CPA)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Many people and organizations support the work of the William Watson Society with financial gifts, memberships fees, voluntary service, and in-kind material and supplies.

The Board would like to especially thank the volunteers for the following events and donations:

### **MEMBERSHIP DRIVE, ANNUAL FUNDRAISER ADDITIONAL DONATIONS**

In January 2020, the Board members and their families and friends gathered together to stuff over 1000 envelopes for our annual newsletter and membership drive. The Board would like to express its sincere gratitude to these volunteers for giving up an entire weekend in order to assist with this major fundraising event. The amount raised from estate donations, non-profit donations, and general donations are noted in the notes of the financial statements.

### **WILLIAM WATSON LODGE STAFF**

A huge thank you from the Board goes out to all those individuals who help run William Watson Lodge, ensuring that all guests have a memorable and quality experience in Kananaskis Country. This includes Management, Guest Services, Caretaking and Maintenance staff, and Summer Volunteer Campground Hosts.

### **BILLY TALBOT GOLF TOURNAMENT**

The 2020 Billy Talbot Golf Tournament was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but there were still patrons that graciously made donations. The Board would like to thank the Talbot family for their ongoing dedication to the William Watson Lodge Society, and to the patrons who donated in 2020. For more information regarding the 2021 Golf Tournament, please contact Donna Talbot at [gtalbot8@gmail.com](mailto:gtalbot8@gmail.com).

The 2021 Billy Talbot Golf Tournament is scheduled to take place June 20, 2021, at the Blue Devil Golf Club in Calgary.



# FORMER LODGE MANAGER HONOURED



Ross Watson was born on August 9, 1950, in Calmar, Alberta. He is an active outdoorsman. Ross lost his vision at 13 years of age from a BB gun accident. Vision loss did not slow him down. Ross received a recreation degree from the University of Alberta, and was later honoured with an honorary Doctorate of Law. Ross served 7 years with the Human Rights Commission.

Ross worked for over 30 years with Alberta Parks, employed with, and later managing, William Watson Lodge. Ross has a keen interest in community development, and served as the longest running councillor for the Town of Cochrane for 16 years.

Ross continues to be an inspiration to many. He is a true adventurer! Ross is an experienced mountaineer and was the first person visually impaired to climb the highest mountain in North America – Denali in Alaska. He is an avid cross-country skier, runner, and loves to bike. We are grateful for the time Ross worked and led at the William Watson Lodge, and we are moved by all the people he has motivated and influenced over the years.

William Watson Lodge would like to honour this wonderful man and will be naming Building H, Unit 22 after him. What a great inspiration he was and continues to be. Thank you, Ross.

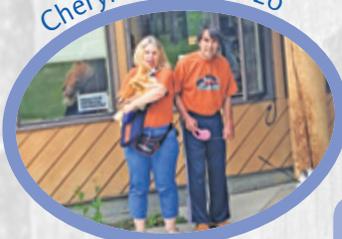
*Gwen Ross-Cieslak*

Gwen and Ross' Last Photo on the Main Lodge Deck



## WORDS FROM ANONYMOUS PATRONS

*Cheryl and Bill, 2020*



Your Lodge is a treasure. It is something for which all Alberta residents can be very proud.

It is wonderful.

An exceptional facility for the disabled and seniors.

Over the past year our senior's club has enjoyed the trails and beautiful scenery of the Kananaskis Country. We welcome the opportunity to stop at the Lodge for a break while hiking, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Thank you for developing and maintaining such facilities for persons with disabilities to enjoy such a unique experience.



## A UNIQUE GEM

I fell in love with Kananaskis Country back in 1984, the first time my older brother introduced me to that area. My brother lived in Calgary at the time, and we were both avid hunters. I hunted, hiked, and took my horses there many times from 1984 to 1995.

On September 15, 1995, my life changed forever. I thought I'd never see the mountains again but, in 1997, I was informed that the Parks Department and many staff had arranged for me and my family to stay at the William Watson Lodge for a week. I knew very little about the lodge but welcomed the thought of returning to the mountains of Kananaskis again. I've returned almost every second year since 1997.

The WWL provides a much needed and affordable break for my family and me from the everyday challenges that a severe disability brings to our lives. There's no other facility like it in our province that we can go to right in the mountains that offers all the equipment and facilities that my disability demands. It's truly a very unique gem and very much appreciated by so

many people that otherwise could not enjoy the mountains. We are so lucky to have the William Watson Lodge and the many people behind the scenes that are passionate in managing and operating it. Government staff, volunteers, WWL Society Members, and private sponsors all deserve acknowledgement for the wonderful work they continue to do to keep this beautiful and much-needed world-class facility running.

*Sam Halabi*

# October 13, 2020 – A Special Day at Coyote Lake Lodge

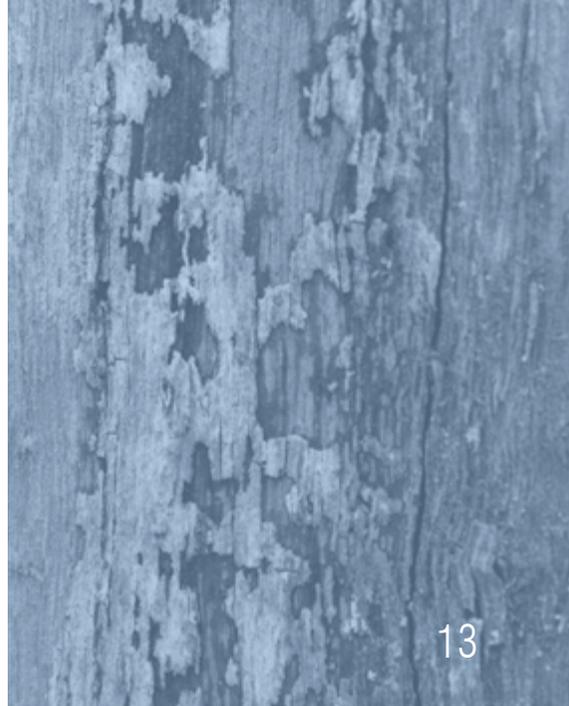
Today is our fifth Anniversary of the ownership by the Alberta Abilities Lodges Society of the Coyote Lake Lodge property. We had a celebration in mind, but COVID-19 scuttled the plans for an Open House where we wished to acknowledge the hundreds of supporters who developed this accessible facility on 480 acres of fields and forests. In spite of the virus, we are hosting a few families who need to experience the peace and quiet of nature while maintaining social distancing in one of the cabins.

Volunteers continue to make renovations and repairs to our buildings so more accessible services are becoming available. Much effort is being expended to renovate a shed for storage of outdoor accessible equipment, and renovations to our Reception Centre will result in a more welcoming atmosphere for guests, volunteers, and day visitors.

Autumn is a great time to visit. The gardens have been put to bed for the winter and most of the vegetables have been delivered to food banks, the elk are bugling, our friendly beaver has moved downstream where there is more water, and the winter birds and feisty squirrels give us much pleasure. We can't wait for you to come for a visit.

*Ask to be included in our email list, visit our lodge, tell your friends about our project, volunteer your time and talents, and donate to our registered charitable society (#844248617RR0001). Our mailing address is: Alberta Abilities Lodges Society, PO Box 4455, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T5.*

*For more information, contact: Ross Wein, AALS President and Prof. Emeritus, Univ. of Alberta; 780-436-0141; rosswein@shaw.ca, Larry Pempeit, AALS Director; 780-231-5142; lpempeit@shaw.ca, Paul Roberts, AALS Director and Scotia Macleod; 780-901-2495; paul.roberts@scotiawealth.com.*





# Treasured Memories



Our family has been enjoying our visits to William Watson Lodge since Skylar was 4, and she is now 18 years old.

Like every family that has a child or children with severe disabilities, there automatically comes a ton of challenges to daily life.

William Watson Lodge is one very welcome escape every year. It's amazing to drive into the picturesque mountains knowing you are going to have a much-needed reprieve from the rest of the world. There is so much comfort in going somewhere as a family knowing you are accepted, safe and welcomed as you are! It's amazing to be able to go to a place that brings your child peace just having been there before. The paved pathways allow for hours of quiet on foot or bike-riding surrounded by nature.

We are so very grateful to the William Watson Lodge Society for continuing to offer families like ours a much-needed getaway that we can all enjoy, afford, and treasure the memories we make together every visit.

Thank you kindly,

*Curt, Tracy, and Skylar*





# Ski for Light – A Barrier-Free Experience



Ski for Light is an organization that brings together blind skiers from across the world for a ski race in Kananaskis. This year, from February 3 to 9, 2020, they hosted their annual event at William Watson Lodge, which provided an opportunity for adults who are blind or visually impaired to share the wonderful experience of cross-country skiing. The event was well-attended, with 72 participants traveling to the Lodge from Europe, the UK, and the USA, in addition to a loyal contingent of Canadians. For some, this was their first time skiing, and for others, it was their fortieth. Regardless of their level of experience, all skiers came for one reason – to enjoy the fun of barrier-free skiing in the ideal setting of William Watson Lodge.

Skiing took place on the perfectly groomed Elkwood campground trails, which provided confidence for our visually impaired and blind skiers. Much of this confidence was due to the double tracking system that was put in, which allowed us to give the skiers a safe and barrier-free experience. The group appreciated the close proximity to the trails, as they only needed to cross the parking lot to begin skiing. Once on the trail, they were able to continue skiing for as long and as far as they wished. Unlike last year, the weather gods were good to us, and we were able to hold our races, which are a great source of fun, good-natured competition. The staff of William Watson vigilantly ensured the paths were cleared and attended to all of our needs, which was greatly appreciated by all!

Ski for Light always brings together a diverse group of attendees. This year, we had a skier in a kilt, and a guide in shorts. There is, however, one thing we know for sure. At night, when the lights burned bright in the cabins, we knew that everyone had enjoyed another wonderful day at William Watson Lodge.

We look forward to seeing you in 2022! Please keep in touch.

President | Ski for Light Canada

info@williamwatsonlodgesociety.com  
www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com

