

THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN A TIME OF NEED

There is much that can be said about the human spirit in a time of crisis. William Watson Lodge and Alberta Parks staff, along with the Canadian Military and First Responders in the Park, demonstrated the spirit we all hope will be there in the event it is ever needed.

This very need arose during the June 2013 Southern Alberta flood that impacted Kananaskis Country. The staff at William Watson Lodge is accustomed to being alert to the needs of people with disabilities who stay and visit the Lodge on a daily basis – from the little requests through to the big crises.

During the flood, William Watson Lodge became the sole emergency center for 250 people. This number included not only current guests of the

Lodge, but also many other individuals who were in K-Country during this fateful time in June.

Many other people such as campers, hikers, and summer cottage residents, were cared for and safely evacuated with the skillful assistance of the Lodge staff.

All individuals in the Park who were essentially trapped, albeit in a very nice place, were provided a safe dry place to 'hang out', share their food, their very fresh flood stories, and be calmly and compassionately comforted and cared for. The community of people with disabilities, as well as any Park visitor in need, can rest assured that the spirit that was so prevalent this time will be there should it be needed again.



Canadian Military preparing to evacuate Lodge guests, including Jim Klassen and his caregiver, Ron Kroetsch

K-COUNTRY FLOOD OF 2013 BY THE NUMBERS

Over **300 mm (11.8 inches)** of rain over **48 hours**
(At weather station on Smith Dorrien/ Spray Trail)

Evacuation Facts:

- **1215** people evacuated from Kananaskis Country
- **399** by helicopter
- **Dozens** by sling under a helicopter
- **One** helicopter had **6** people, **4** dogs and a parrot
- **10** helicopters used
- **220** armed forces personnel were used during evacuations
- **22** Conservation Officers/Park Rangers were involved
- **Dozens** of other staff

Highway Damage:

- **12** bridges **damaged/destroyed**
- **50** washouts
- **44** land/rock slides



Cormorant Military helicopter setting up to land in the parking lot at Elkwood Campground, just across Highway 742 from William Watson Lodge

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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 Us

William Watson Lodge Society
Box 30344 Chinook Postal Outlet
6455 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary, AB T2H 2W1
www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com
Email: wwlodgesociety@shaw.ca

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 addresses above.

Accommodation Reservations

Cabins, RV Sites, Main Lodge Day Use
Call (Rite) toll free 310-0000,
Then (403) 591-7227

2014 Annual General Meeting

William Watson Lodge Society
At William Watson Lodge
Saturday, June 21, 2014 at 11:30 a.m.
Followed by the Open House at 1:00 p.m.

Please Join Us

Volunteers – Camp Hosts

During the camping season you may wish to volunteer as a camp host for two weeks. The WWL front desk will provide the duties of a host upon arrival. There are 13 full service sites. One is set aside for the hosts.

Ross Watson, Manager, selects the hosts.

For More Information

William Watson Lodge
(403) 591-7227
Brochure: Peter Loughheed Visitor Information
Centre (toll free) 310-0000,
Then (403) 591-6322
Kananaskis Park Website
www.parks.gov.ab.ca/kananaskis

THE FLOOD OF 2013



Patti Johnston and Gwen Ross-Cieslak are Alberta Parks staff members who collectively have worked at the Lodge for nearly five decades. Patti and Gwen played pivotal roles in supporting not only Lodge guests during the June 2013 southern Alberta flood, but to all evacuees who unexpectedly found the Lodge their home for three days following the flood.

In all the years working at the Lodge, Patti and Gwen have never experienced anything remotely comparable to the flood. Previously, some guests have been delayed in or out for a day or two by a snow storm, and the Park was evacuated for a fire ban and for the G8 Summit. However, everyone was able to leave on their own accord in those situations. The flood was a very different scenario. Following are Patti's and Gwen's accounts

Patti Johnston, Lodge Assistant, 21 years with Alberta Parks

It is Wednesday June 19th, 2013. My shift at William Watson Lodge started at 3:00 p.m. and the doors closed at 9:00 pm. At 4:00 a.m. the alarm sounded phone trouble. A call to Kananaskis Emergency Services (KES) by Park radio told me we had no phone lines and the roads were washed away at different spots. I alerted Ross Watson, Lodge Manager by email. Ross was scheduled to come to work at 8 a.m.

Radio broadcast talked of washed-out roads and damage to Canmore and Banff. We seemed safe except for the pouring rain. As the morning went on I knew that we were going nowhere. I informed residents and campers that they should stay put. Email messages were sent to friends and family of people staying here. I compiled a list of bookings for Gwen (my colleague who was in Canmore) and Ross to cancel from their home.

During that day water was rationed and a boil water advisory was issued. Water in the basements of the first four buildings resulted in not having functioning furnaces or hot water.

Guests and staff helped. Marco from Aqua Tech helped with our furnaces and tanks. Mandy MacDonald, a former staff member, pitched in.



Wary four legged friends awaiting their helicopter ride

Campground hosts, Pat and Keith Reed, brought food and went door to door talking to people.

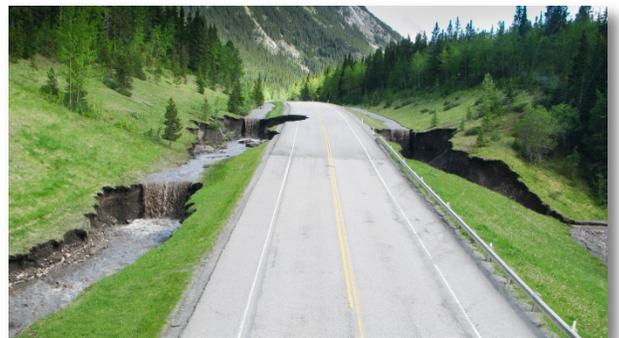
Friday morning arrangements were made for medication, food and water to be flown into the Lodge which had become the logistics and information headquarters.

Saturday morning the Canadian Military arrived, as well as backup staff, including Gwen.

~ Patti Johnston

Gwen Ross-Cieslak, Lodge Assistant, 28 years with Alberta Parks

The devastation I saw on the short flight from Canmore to Peter Lougheed Park was overwhelming. There were piles of rocks and mud blocked roads. Some chunks of road are missing. Guard rails were hanging in mid-air. Buried wires and phone lines were hanging in the air or lying in the creeks. Waterfalls were in places where I have never seen them before. There were holes in the landscape and no animals were seen.



Crevasse and cascading waterfalls emerge along Highway 40

I arrived at the Lodge shortly after the Canadian Military arrived in helicopters. Park visitors, including people from all over the world - Holland, Scotland, England, the US and of course, Canada - had now congregated at the Lodge. A German couple were tent camping in the Kananaskis on their honeymoon. Many Park visitors had rented vehicles and motorhomes. Some visitors, including our camp hosts, the Reeds, learned that their homes were flooded.

The decision was made by Parks to fly out all visitors, including our WWL guests. They left with one bag each. Camping units and vehicles stayed behind, not only for guests of the Lodge but all evacuees from the area.

Two off-duty Sheriffs and Park Staff, Claudette and Mandy, volunteered to drive a handibus to Elkwood. From there, passengers boarded Military helicopters and were flown to Stoney Nakoda Casino where the Red Cross was standing by to help.

The Military continued to fly people out until 12:30 Saturday night. We were so thankful for their help.

At 7:30 a.m. Sunday we started flying again. By 3:00 p.m. we had evacuated over 250 people, as well as 22 dogs, a cat and a bird in a cage. One couple got engaged on their helicopter ride.

The spirit of the people was amazing! They worked together and helped in every way that they could. We are proud of everyone involved.

The Lodge remained closed for three weeks because the roads were out and we had no phone service

~ Gwen Ross-Cieslak



Guard rails remain intact as portions of Highway 40 are washed away, stranding hundreds

WILLIAM WATSON LODGE SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2013-2014

President	Wayne Pelletier
Vice President and Newsletter	Terry Garvin
Treasurer	Farhood Rahnama
Director, Secretary and Newsletter	Carol Page
Director and Membership/Donations	Donna Fox
Director and Northern Alberta Liaison	Ross Wein
Director and Newsletter	Peter Cosentino
Director and Grants	Frank Peck
Director	Sandra Sebree

Technical Resources

William Watson Lodge Manager	Ross Watson
WWL Staff Resource Associate	Gwen Ross-Cieslak
WWL Staff Resource Associate	Patti Johnston

The Board wishes to extend a very special thank you to Enid Pettifer who dedicated 4 years to serving on the Board. We thank Enid for her compassion, great ideas, website management, and goodies at our Board meetings.

IMPACT ON THE TRAIL

The torrent of rain that fell in June 2013, causing severe flood damage in the area, did not harm the surface of the Interpretive Trail. However, the flow of water in the stream over which the trail bridge is built was higher and flowed stronger than it has in recent years.

This caused erosion of soil, and exposure of roots and stones. The rush of water, as it carried debris, deepened and/or widened the channel most of the way along the trail. Despite this, the new appearance of the stream is as attractive as the old one and the trail was not damaged.

FLOOD OF 2013 MEMORIES ARE MADE OF:

Heavy rain.
 Flooding.
 Road washouts and slides.
 Isolation.
 Patti in control.
 Next Gwen and the Army.
 Total care and control.
 Even with danger all around.
 Helicopters arrive.
 Sunset helicopter tour of the ravaged Kananaskis.
 And then more care.
 The car came back!!!



Jean with furry family member, Lucy, at the Lodge waiting for evacuation

~ Wally & Jean Derbyshire

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

William Watson Lodge Society Balance Sheet as of November 4, 2013

ASSETS

Cash and Bank Accounts	
Bank Operating Account	\$75,205.77
Casino Account	47,022.77
ING Savings	98,929.74

TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts \$221,158.28

Other Assets

Account Receivable	-
GST Receivable.	\$420.12
Interest Receivable	-
Prepaid Expenses	765.00

TOTAL Other Assets \$1,185.12

TOTAL ASSETS \$222,343.40

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

LIABILITIES

Other Liabilities	-
Account Payable	-
Deferred Revenue ¹	\$57,797.09
Recycle Program	624.22

TOTAL Other Liabilities \$58,421.31

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$58,421.31

EQUITY \$163,922.09

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY \$222,343.40

THANK YOU TO BOWCYCLE



Staff at the Lodge and members of the WWLS thank Mr. John Franzky and Bowcycle in Calgary for their generous assistance in repairing the side-by-side bicycle which is used with enthusiasm by guests of the Lodge.

The bike has been a popular addition to the leisure services our volunteers provide to guests, who with caregivers and facilities of the Park, have the opportunity to be out in the wilderness of Kananaskis Country. A ride on this bike for people who cannot ride on their own provides a special way to connect with the natural environment.

WILLIAM WATSON LODGE SOCIETY BUSINESS PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

In the spring of 2013 the Board and lodge staff, with the assistance of external consultant Grant Howell, identified many opportunities that will enable the fulfillment of our mandate. From more than a dozen opportunities identified, seven were chosen for implementation during the 2013-2016 Business Plan cycle.

- 1 **Communication Plan and Materials:** Development of a comprehensive, well organized Awareness and Communication Plan and associated materials that will tell the story of William Watson Lodge to the people for which it is intended, the public and those who might wish to contribute to the enhancement and usefulness of this great facility.

Project update: In progress

Estimated Completion: Ongoing

- 2 **Cover Structure Over Fire Pit:** Erection of a roof cover over the public campfire area, so clients can enjoy a get together by the fire during all kinds of weather.

Project update: Plans have been approved and pilot holes have been dug

Estimated Completion: Late Spring 2014

- 3 **Marsh Viewpoint Enhancement:** Development of a Marsh Viewpoint Trail to provide opportunities for all to view the marshland near the Lodge.

Project update: Delayed by June 2013 flood

Estimated Completion: Summer 2014

- 4 **Lake Viewpoint Trail Connector:** Development of a connector trail that will give improved access to the beautiful viewpoints overlooking the Lower Kananaskis Lake.

Project update: Delayed by June 2013 flood.

Estimated Completion: Summer 2014

- 5 **Wireless Internet Accessibility:** Investigating the possibility of providing internet capability for the cabins at the Lodge and, if permitted, the installation of the necessary equipment.

Project update: In progress

Estimated Completion: Unknown

- 6 **Comfort Camping:** Provision of an accessible "comfort camping" site in the campground that can serve as a model for accessible camping across the province.

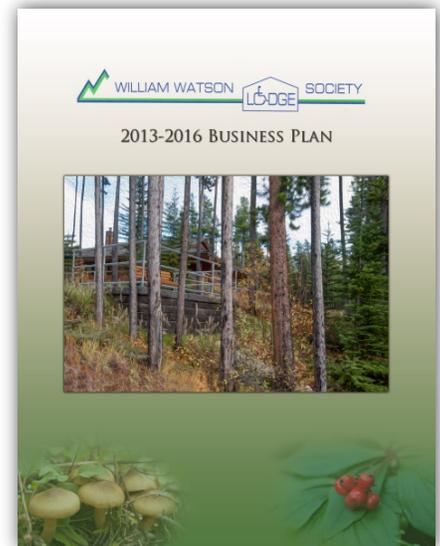
Project Update: Contact has been initiated with possible suppliers

Estimated Completion: Spring/Summer 2014

- 7 **Additional Lower Cost Items:** Provision of additional items that will be helpful to the Lodge in fulfilling its role. These items would include an additional defibrillator, digital information system, night security camera for the Lodge entrance, etc.

Project: Partially completed and in progress

Estimated Completion: Spring 2014



2013 BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

In 2013, the Society completed the following activities designed to enhance the comfort of guests staying at the William Watson Lodge:

- Development of a three year Business Plan
- Purchase of heavy duty luggage carts for each cabin to make loading and unloading more convenient
- Purchase of a four passenger golf style cart for use by campground hosts/staff or to transport visitors and our less mobile guests throughout the pathways and trails
- Participation in a successful fundraising Casino in September 2013, raising an additional \$47,000 to go towards projects outlined in the Business Plan
- Hosting of a very successful, well attended Open House in June 2013



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

The WWLS Board of Directors would like to thank the many volunteers who assisted in the following events:

- January 2013 fund raising/membership drive
- June 2013 Open House
- September Annual General Meeting
- Lodge staff for their ongoing support and collaboration
- Thank you to all the organizers and volunteers who spent two long days at the Century Casino in Calgary in mid-September of 2013. The Society received \$47,000 from the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission as its share of the casino revenues for 2013.

WET VISIT TO K-COUNTRY DIDN'T DAMPEN CAMPER'S SPIRIT

Jeffrey Kulyk, a Saskatchewan resident, was hiking in Kananaskis Country with childhood friend, Alyssa Tracy-Roth. Although Jeffrey had hiked in the mountains before, it was to be a new experience for Alyssa. Little did they know Mother Nature would provide both of them an adventure neither one of them could have imagined.

Alyssa and I were looking forward to spending a week together on a camping trip in the Rockies. We had no idea that the week ahead would leave us with many unexpected and unforgettable memories.

A few days prior to the flood, we inadvertently discovered William Watson Lodge coming off of the Lower Lake Trail. I assumed the lodgings were private cabins, but was puzzled by the plentiful concrete ramps and guiderails around complex. The cabins looked considerably more attractive than our fabric tent.

The ceaseless rain made for an arduous day of hiking and, since our tent was drenched, we spent an unpleasant night sleeping in my car. As we ventured out to leave the park the following morning, a conservation officer informed us of the flooding situation. I was totally dumbstruck – this was something that you read about, see on TV, and think “that would never happen to me”. Seven hours later we went to the Visitor Centre to see if there was any relief for tent campers in Elkwood. I was ecstatic when Claudette Landry said that there was still one room left at the William Watson Lodge.

Patti Johnston welcomed Alyssa and me to the Lodge, showed us to unit 14, and made us feel at home. We were thrilled to trade the cramped, cold, and wet car for the palatial, warm, and dry cabin. The lodge was truly a godsend and we appreciated the shelter even more when it snowed the following day: the summer solstice.



Guests of the Lodge and evacuees gather while waiting for evacuation activities to begin

The days before the evacuation began were actually quite pleasant. Most people were in good spirits and we enjoyed sharing stories of our varied experiences of the flood. I admired how professionally, effectively, and compassionately the WWL staff managed what was an unimaginably challenging situation. In the following days, the coordinated effort between the WWL, Alberta Parks, and the Canadian Air Force to carry out a complete air evacuation was a truly great undertaking.

In my free time I read about Stuart Warriar (whom Cabin #14 is named after), the founder William Watson, and the Lodge's history and operations. The WWL was previously unknown to me. I was impressed by its noble mission and the quality of facilities and staff in place to achieve that mission. It is very fitting that William Watson's legacy of overcoming adversity was extended by helping camping refugees overcome the adversities of a natural disaster.

I can't imagine how we would have fared without the generosity of the Lodge's staff. I am forever profoundly grateful and will treasure the memories of my experience at the William Watson Lodge.

~ Jeffrey Kulyk

I want to thank you very much for giving my son, Jeffrey Kulyk, shelter during the flood in June.

I was glued to the news on the TV when I realized Jeffrey and his friend may be trapped. It was a very stressful time for us – the not knowing. We were so relieved when we finally found out they were safe and dry at your Lodge. I can never thank you enough for taking them in. I also appreciate the efforts by all of the pilots and crew that moved the evacuees to safety. It was an experience we will never forget.

~ Marilyn, Kulyk, Mother of Jeffrey

In appreciation, Marilyn made a generous donation to the William Watson Lodge Society. This donation was gratefully received and will go towards funding one of the projects outlined in the 2013-2016 Business Plan.



Jeffrey Kulyk during evacuation aboard Armed Forces Cormorant rescue helicopter



View of the devastation in Kananaskis Country as seen from the evacuation helicopter on June 23, 2013

FIRST TIME CAMPGROUND HOSTS GET HOSTING EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

On June 17, 2013, my husband Keith and I drove up to William Watson Lodge in Kananaskis to host in the campground. It was our first time doing this and we were looking forward to the experience. Little did we know what we were about to face.

Early morning on June 21, we went to the Lodge and were informed by Patti (who was in charge at the Lodge that day) that our home was flooded in High River, and the whole of High River was devastated by the flooding. Since we were hosting in the campground, we were considered to be part of the Staff. So we started to help Patti as much as we could.

It was soon learned that Highway 40, which connected Highway #1 and the Highwood Pass, had numerous mudslides and bridge washouts. This meant that all campers and hikers were totally isolated with no exit. William Watson Lodge became the Headquarters, and any empty cabins were used to house as many people as possible.

There were serious concerns about medications and food running out. We soon heard that everyone was going to be evacuated, including all Staff.

The Lodge was soon filled with Conservation Officers, Military helicopter pilots and many concerned people.

The campers and cabin residents were requested to empty their fridges and bring their food to the Lodge. Everyone was to prepare to be air lifted.

The next few days were a whirlwind of chores, as people were fed, informed and reassured. There wasn't time for us to worry about our flooded home.



Alpine Helicopters of Canmore also assisted in the evacuation efforts by transporting people, supplies and medication. Alpine's own business location in Canmore was impacted by the flood as well.

There were about 250 people airlifted and taken to the Nakoda Casino (at the corner of Highway 40 and Highway 1) where buses took us wherever in Calgary we wished to go. Many schools in Calgary were prepared to help in any way with food and beds, if necessary. We were finally able to contact our daughter.

Two weeks later we were allowed to go back to William Watson Lodge to pick up our motorhome and car. Prior to that, we spent the time with help from family and friends, trying to get rid of mud and destroyed belongings, as we were unable to get into our home until 9 days after the flood.

We were able to live in the upstairs of our home beginning August 18 after water and electricity were restored and a new furnace was installed. We feel so fortunate that it wasn't worse. It will be at least several more months before everything is repaired and replaced. However, we are safe and comfortable which many people are not. Our hearts go out to them.

~ Pat Reed, Camp Host

2013 WWLS OPEN HOUSE

On June 8, 2013, the William Watson Lodge Society and Lodge staff hosted an Open house at the Lodge. The event was well attended. The guests and visitors enjoyed the Barbeque lunch provided on the back deck of the Lodge while taking in the breathtaking views. The Board staff provided guided tours of the surrounding trails. For the less mobile guests, golf cart tours were provided of the facility. The tours also included access to the interiors of the cabins and campsites. The features of the cabins and accessibility to the lodge and surrounding areas were informative and well received. We look forward to seeing you all at the 2014 Open House.

2014 WWLS Open House Saturday, June 21, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. Following the Annual General Meeting

- Come view the Lodge, cabins and campsites
- Enjoy fun activities, sit around a campfire
- Food and drinks provided



Wayne Pelletier, President of the WWLS, serving up lunch to guests at the 2013 Open House



Jack and Scott Morton enjoying a bike ride at the Lodge

MEDICAL BENEFITS OF THE WILLIAM WATSON LODGE



Frank Peck with his caregivers Jennifer Fernandez and Teresa Orolpza, along with Frank's canine companion, Muppet

Shangri-La in Alberta *by Frank Peck*

In early 2010, I contacted an illness that left me paralyzed. Due to the great care at the University of Alberta Hospital and the miracle workers at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, I regained the use of my arms and hands. It is during this time that I heard about the William Watson Lodge with its health and wellness mandate for Albertans with disabilities. I had always enjoyed hiking in the mountains before I took ill and thought I would try a stay at the WWL to recapture the joy that I got from the mountains and the outdoors.

Well, to say I was impressed would be an understatement, I could not believe the facility with kilometres of wheelchair friendly paved trails, cabins built to accommodate the handicapped, very friendly and helpful staff and most of all the familiar sights, sounds and smells of the great outdoors. I have two caregivers that accompany me and we all enjoy the stays at the WWL, without which the enjoyment of Alberta's great outdoors would just be a wish and not a reality.

My caregivers are Jennifer and Teresa. My canine buddy is Muppet who I had for over 18 years.

Frank has since joined the William Watson Lodge Society Board and is managing the Grants portfolio.

William Watson Lodge is Good Medicine *by Ross Wein*

Visit for a few minutes with caregivers and persons with a disability at William Watson Lodge and you hear many words that explain why this lodge is a medical life-saver.

Of course there is recreation, fun, camaraderie, meeting with people who have similar experiences. Other words, including well-being, respite, quiet, peace, inspiration, and stimulation, may sound like social benefits but they are based in physical and mental health physiology.

All of the above words could be brought together under the heading of stress-reduction and hope for a better future. Ask any family, with a member recovering from a traumatic accident, if there is stress! Ask any family, with a child diagnosed with autism, if there is stress! Ask any family, with a grandfather coping with Alzheimer's disease, if there is stress!

Stress is a loss of control over the life of everyone in the family. Stress can undermine physical and mental well-being and the impact can range from annoying, to debilitating, and even to sickness.

William Watson Lodge is a facility in a mountain environment where an individual or a family can unwind, relax, exercise, and gain control. Walk the trails, sit by a lake, watch the changing mountain weather, stare into a campfire, visit with a friend over coffee, and above all sit around a dinner table and come to grips with your family's future. Make plans to cope with stress during your visit and then implement the plan when you return home. If you manage stress, medical researchers tell us that you will have more fun, your family ties will strengthen, and you will live longer.



PROGRESS TOWARDS A WILLIAM WATSON LODGE NORTH

The Alberta Abilities Lodges Society (AALS) is taking the lead in establishing a family-oriented disability and senior friendly lodge in north-central Alberta that is modelled after William Watson Lodge. AALS was registered as a society in 2007 and received charitable status in 2009.

Our overarching goal is to make opportunities for more persons with a disability and seniors to enjoy nature all through the year. Our projects include: building an inventory of adapted outdoor equipment, holding outdoor events alone and in cooperation with partners such as Alberta Parks, and establishing a Disabled Travel Fund endowment that will be used to assist individuals and families to enjoy the outdoors.

AALS Directors, Ross Watson, Manager of William Watson Lodge and Terry Garvin, Director of the William Watson Lodge Society, bring much experience to our north-central Alberta lodge project. Progress to date includes the completion of a Needs Assessment that provides justification for more lodges like William Watson Lodge and gives direction for developing other accessible lodges. We have identified a property located west of Edmonton and are now raising funds for property purchase, building renovations, and new building construction.

Please support this important project.

Contact Information:

Ross W. Wein, President, AALS
Tel: 780-436-0141, Email: rosswein@shaw.ca.

Alberta Abilities Lodges Society, c/o Canadian Paraplegic Assoc., #305, 11010- 101 St., Edmonton, Alberta T5H 4B9



Artist's rendition of three exposed stumps normally covered by water in Lower Lake, Kananaskis (June 2013)

PHOTO CREDITS

Jeffrey Kulyk
Terry Garvin
Gwen Ross-Cieslak
Ross Wein
Carol Page