

SCOUT ISLAND NATURE CENTRE



MANAGEMENT PLAN

2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scout Island Nature Centre is located on the traditional, unceded lands of the T'exelcenc (people of the Williams Lake First Nation), who are members of the Secwépemc Nation. The lands and waters of Scout Island Nature Centre were part of a Secwépemc village site prior to Euro-American colonization. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists commit to working with the Williams Lake First Nation to increase public awareness of T'exelcenc history and traditional knowledge.

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists gratefully acknowledges the on-going support of the Nature Trust of BC for our operation of Scout Island Nature Centre (SINC). The City of Williams Lake has provided key support including financial, materials, and labour to the operation of the Nature Centre. We also thank the many WL Field Naturalist members and other volunteers who have offered their time and skills so tirelessly to the operation of SINC. Sue Hemphill, educator and executive director of Scout Island Nature Centre, has guided and contributed many volunteer hours to keep the Nature Centre operating in a changing world. This management plan was drafted by a committee of Williams Lake Field Naturalist directors with facilitation support from Jane Wellburn of the Fraser Basin Council.

Without funding from the following groups, this plan would not have been possible. We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Cariboo Regional District (Grant for Assistance), the Williams Lake Community Forest (Community Granting Program) and the BC Naturalists' Foundation (Club Support Grant). Thank you!

DEDICATION

This management plan is dedicated to Anna Roberts whose contributions and inspiration of others over nearly 50 years of dedicated volunteer work have shaped the formation and development of Scout Island Nature Centre. She was a key influence in encouraging the Nature Trust of BC to acquire Scout Island, was the first president of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, developed many of the displays in the Nature House, led the formation and development of nature education classes for children, developed guides to plants and animals of the Nature Centre, and developed outdoor displays and native plant gardens. Evidence of her contributions and influence are everywhere at Scout Island Nature Centre.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this plan is to guide administration and program management of Scout Island Nature Centre for the next 10 years. The plan builds on, updates, and replaces the 2003

management plan and incorporate goals and objectives for the Nature Centre which have evolved or formed since 2003.

The Nature Trust of BC (NTBC), which owns most of the Nature Centre lands, is recognized as the overarching authority for management of their lands. However, this plan also recognizes the major roles of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and the City of Williams Lake in joint day-to-day management of the Nature Centre lands under terms of lease agreements with the NTBC and the City.



This plan recognizes that the Nature Centre is on unceded traditional lands of the Secwépemc Nation and the people of T'exelc (Williams Lake First Nation). The plan acknowledges the importance of cooperation between the Field Naturalists and the T'exelcme (people of T'exelc) to achieve Nature Centre goals. It also identifies the importance of Nature Centre sponsored programs to enhance public awareness of traditional T'exelcme knowledge.

This plan identifies 26 actionable goals for achieving management and program objectives under six topic areas: 1) Administration and Staffing, 2) Nature Education, 3) Nature Interpretation, 4) Infrastructure and Facility Management, 5) Ecosystem Conservation and Management, and 6) Promotion and Tourism. The goals under each of these topics have been drawn from several sources including the 2003 management plan, the lease agreements with the NTBC, input from a public survey conducted in 2021, on-going communications with the NTBC and the City of Williams Lake, communications with representatives of the Williams Lake First Nation, and years of goal setting discussions among Field Naturalists directors and Nature Centre staff. Many of the goals of the 2003 plan have been achieved. Remaining and new

actionable strategies range from those that are readily and simply implemented to others requiring long-term commitment and substantial effort.

The goals in this plan reaffirm the emphasis in the 2003 plan, on

- nature education, especially for children
- infrastructure to facilitate public enjoyment and observation of nature
- conservation of Scout Island habitats.

The current administration and education program structure of Scout Island Nature Centre is reaffirmed in this plan.

Goals with increased emphasis, compared to the 2003 plan, include

- inclusion of First Nations' traditional knowledge
- outdoor interpretive signage and guides
- community participation in and support for Scout Island Nature Centre programs and projects
- Nature Centre branding and promotion
- nature education and awareness programs for adults
- modernization of natural history displays and signage
- security and mitigation measures to address increased public access and use
- habitat management planning
- restoration of disturbed Scout Island ecosystems



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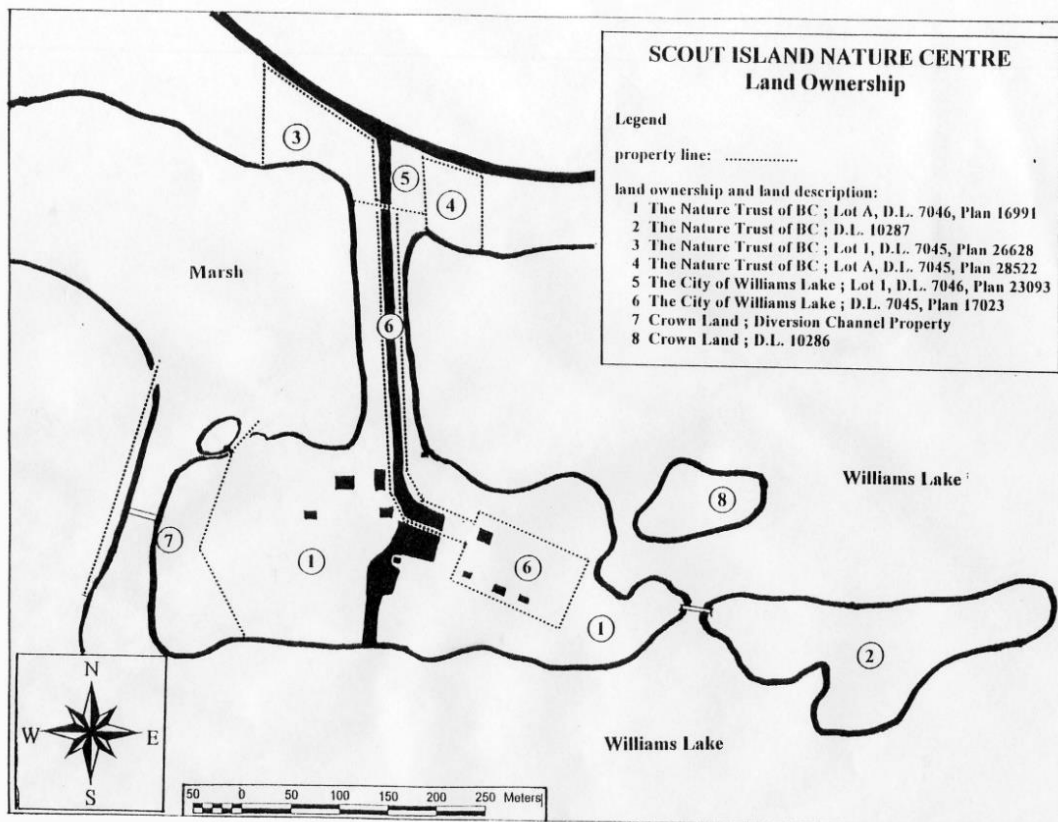
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INTRODUCTION

Scout Island Nature Centre is a relatively natural, wild area of three islands surrounded by marsh and lake environments within the City of Williams Lake, British Columbia. The Centre offers nature education courses and interpretation facilities as well as nearly 3 km of walking trails through marsh, riparian, and upland habitats. For more than 40 years, the Nature Centre has been a place where people of all ages can enjoy and view native wildlife and plants. The Nature Centre has also been a popular place for people to gather for natural history programs, nature education and research. The Nature Centre offers opportunities for the public to deepen their understanding and appreciation of nature, and respect for the land.

The Scout Island Nature Centre property is largely owned by The Nature Trust of BC, with additional parcels owned by the City of Williams Lake and the Crown. This management plan applies to those properties under the ownership of the Nature Trust. The Nature Centre is comprised of the Nature House, the Centre's main facility for nature education, and the surrounding trails, boardwalks and interpretive signage (See page 17, Map 2: Scout Island Trails and Features). As previously acknowledged, Scout Island was part of a Secwépemc village site prior to Euro-American colonization and it is of historical significance to many Indigenous people.



Map 1: Scout Island Nature Centre Land Ownership

The first management plan for the Scout Island Nature Centre was produced in 2003 (updated in 2004). That plan was invaluable in directing the operations and programs of the Nature Centre and a great many of the tasks specified within it have been completed in the years since the plan was implemented. Due to changing operational and financial conditions and nature education program needs, this new management plan was initiated under the direction of a facilitator in 2021 and was completed in 2022 to guide the Nature Centre through the next 10 to 15 years. It was a collaborative effort that, like most of the Nature Centre's activities was produced through the time, effort, and commitment of many volunteers.

In spring 2021, the committee developed a survey for area residents and visitors to the Scout Island Nature Centre in order to gather feedback on how the community uses and values the Nature Centre and its programs, and how it could be improved to better support community needs. Throughout the month of June, the survey was widely publicized and available online and at the Nature Centre. In total, 283 surveys were completed, and the responses are summarized in Appendix 8. Throughout the survey, participant responses generally showed great support for current management practices and programs, a clear attachment to the wild and natural aspects of Scout Island Nature Centre, and support for the staff and volunteers that have built the Nature Centre to what it is today. There was also an overwhelming response from the community to provide information on Indigenous traditional views of nature. As a result, the management plan commits to working with the Williams Lake First Nation to increase public awareness of T'exelcenc traditional knowledge through interpretive signage, guided tours and educational presentations for youth and adults. There was also a variety of suggestions for other improvements and the committee has done its best to incorporate the suggested changes into the management plan.

Like the previous management plan, this one is divided into six key components of the Nature Centre's operations. Each key component includes several goals and strategies to meet those goals. The goals set out in the management plan will ensure that the Scout Island Nature Centre continues to provide nature education and nature viewing opportunities to its visitors for many more years.



MISSION STATEMENT

Scout Island Nature Centre is one of more than 500 conservation areas acquired by The Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) since its formation in 1971. The mission of the NTBC is to conserve the rich biodiversity of BC by securing and managing ecologically significant private lands. Although the overarching goal of all properties is conservation of natural ecosystems, individual properties, including Scout Island Nature Centre, often have additional specific missions. Scout Island Nature Centre was purchased by NTBC in 1973 to protect ecologically significant marsh, riparian, and upland ecosystems which are located within an urban setting where opportunities for public nature enjoyment and awareness are large.

The specific mission of Scout Island Nature Centre is to encourage a deeper public knowledge and connection with nature among people of all ages through nature education programs and provision of facilities and guides that encourage greater exposure to nature, especially on the Scout Island property and adjacent marshlands.



VISION STATEMENT

Scout Island Nature Centre is a sanctuary for the wild within an urban area. It is a place for nature education, reflection, experience, exploration, appreciation, and conservation. It is a place where we can all come to better know the natural world and the relationships and dependencies all people have with it. Scout Island Nature Centre provides an opportunity for every person, especially every child, to encounter nature, and in turn, to find the joy that being in nature offers.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFFING

Scout Island Nature Centre lands and structures are mostly owned by the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) which has final administrative authority on management of the lands. Day-to-day management responsibility for Scout Island was transferred to the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists by lease agreements in 1973 and 1977 respectively (see Appendices 4 and 5).

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists board of directors (also serving as, and referred to throughout this document as, the Scout Island Nature Centre Committee (SINC Committee)) has served as the



principal administrative body for Scout Island Nature Centre since March 1977. Under the lease agreement between the City of Williams Lake and the NTBC, and the sub-lease agreement between the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, the Nature Centre has become a crucial component in local nature education and an increasingly popular location for nature enjoyment amongst residents and tourists. Administrative responsibilities of the SINC Committee include maintaining a governance structure that reflects and fulfills the lease agreements related to Nature Centre lands and responsibilities; building and maintaining relationships with municipal and First Nations governments; staffing, including summer students and volunteers; securing funding for programming; and representing the interests of the Nature Centre to other community organizations to strengthen relationships and create broad community support for the Nature Centre.

GOVERNANCE

Goal 1 Management of Scout Island Nature Centre lands and infrastructure will be based on a cooperative working relationship among the Nature Trust of BC, the City of Williams Lake, and the SINC Committee, who all support the above mission and vision of the Nature Centre

Strategy 1.1 Define, and adapt as necessary, a process and administrative structure for management of the Nature Centre

- *Management of the Nature Centre lands and infrastructure will be guided by and be consistent with pertinent lease and sublease agreements (see Appendices 4 and 5)*
- *NTBC approval will be required for all management decisions when there is a question regarding consistency with the intent of lease agreements*
- *Nature Centre infrastructure maintenance or improvement projects may be initiated by the SINC Committee or the City of Williams Lake*

- *Projects initiated by the SINC Committee will be funded by various sources, potentially including the City of Williams Lake*
- *The City of Williams Lake will have primary responsibility for maintenance of the picnic grounds, beach, and boat launch and for major maintenance needs of the Nature House and caretaker's house. The City of Williams Lake will also have responsibility for some minor repairs (i.e. lighting, plumbing, and electrical issues) at the Nature House and caretaker's house as requested by the administrator. The SINC Committee will have primary responsibility for the day-to-day development and minor maintenance of the trails, grounds, interpretive facilities, Nature House, and caretaker's house. The City of Williams Lake and the SINC Committee will cooperate on major maintenance and development projects on the NTBC property*
- *The Nekw7usem bridge is the responsibility of the City of Williams Lake and they will ensure secure access to Scout Island over this bridge through continuous video recording with digital storage, a gate, or other appropriate means*
- *Safety issues related to Scout Island should be reported to the Scout Island administrator as soon as possible*

Strategy 1.2 Regular meetings of the joint Scout Island Advisory Committee will maintain communication regarding maintenance and development of Scout Island Nature Centre lands and infrastructure. The joint committee will consist of SINC Committee representatives (including the Nature Centre administrator), senior City of Williams Lake administrative staff, and an elected City of Williams Lake Councillor

- *The joint committee will meet regularly to propose, assess, evaluate, and seek funding for priority infrastructure and facility needs and plans*
- *SINC Committee representatives (including the Nature Centre administrator) will prepare and submit to the joint committee a list of current management priorities and actions for Nature Centre Lands and infrastructure, consistent with the mission of the Nature Centre*
- *The joint committee will explore opportunities for achieving the mission of the Nature Centre and the NTBC by careful development on City owned portions of Scout Island*

Strategy 1.3 Day-to-day management of the Nature Centre lands, infrastructure, and programs are the principal responsibility of the SINC Committee but will be delegated primarily to a Scout Island administrator (or executive director)

- *The Field Naturalists will hire a Nature Centre administrator who will oversee day-to-day management of Nature Centre lands, infrastructure, and programs (see Strategy 4.2)*
- *Projects and programs of a type or scope without precedence will be pre-approved by the SINC Committee*

- *The Scout Island administrator will keep the SINC Committee well informed about management decisions and actions*
- *The City of Williams Lake will provide utility services to Scout Island, including the Nature House and caretaker's house*

Strategy 1.4 A caretaker will live on-site and, in exchange for rent-free housing, will help to protect and maintain the property, open and close the causeway gate, remove litter, and assist visitors as described by a written agreement provided to the caretaker

Goal 2 The SINC Committee will work to maintain a cooperative and respectful relationship with the Williams Lake First Nation regarding management of Scout Island Nature Centre, including its objectives, education programs, signage, displays, and infrastructure development

Strategy 2.1 The current Scout Island Nature Centre management plan and any updates will be provided to the Williams Lake First Nation; the SINC Committee will respond fully and appropriately to all comments from the First Nation

Strategy 2.2 The SINC Committee will annually, or as appropriate, inform and seek input from the Williams Lake First Nation about Nature Centre programs and interpretive facilities

Strategy 2.3 The SINC Committee will consult Williams Lake First Nation's archaeologists before conducting any significant excavation or displacement of native soil materials from Nature Trust or adjacent crown lands

Goal 3 School-based nature education programs offered by Scout Island Nature Centre will be designed and administered by Nature Centre staff (the Scout Island administrator and education coordinator) in consultation with School District #27 and Williams Lake First Nation representatives, and with approval of the SINC Committee

STAFFING

Goal 4 Scout Island Nature Centre will employ or contract sufficient staff, working with the SINC Committee, to meet principal goals for land and infrastructure maintenance, finances, nature education, and nature interpretation

Strategy 4.1 Scout Island Nature Centre will employ or contract a paid administrator (or executive director), education coordinator, and seasonal or part time educators and teacher naturalists

Strategy 4.2 The administrator hired by the SINC Committee, will oversee day-to-day management of the Nature Centre, hire other staff, supervise, and assist education program development and implementation, raise funds for staffing and programs, coordinate volunteers, and prepare project and annual reports

Strategy 4.3 Job descriptions for the administrator and education coordinator positions will be prepared by the SINC Committee

Strategy 4.4 The administrator will hire maintenance staff as required for upkeep of facilities, trails, and grounds, and additional staff as required

Strategy 4.5 Scout Island Nature Centre will strive to employ First Nations persons as nature educators in coordination with the Williams Lake First Nation

FINANCES/FUNDING

Goal 5 Long term, stable funding will be in place and sufficient to support staffing and education goals

Strategy 5.1 The Scout Island Nature Centre administrator, assisted by and with approval of the SINC Committee, will apply for and manage funding for Nature Centre programs and projects

Strategy 5.2 Funding will be procured from a variety of sources, including foundations and governments

Strategy 5.3 The Scout Island Nature Centre endowment fund will be maintained and promoted

Strategy 5.4 Community fund raising campaigns (such as the annual banquet) will be continued and expanded

VOLUNTEERISM

Goal 6 Continue the involvement of volunteers as the foundation for many of the Nature Centre's activities

Strategy 6.1 Promote SINC volunteerism in the community to ensure interested individuals and groups are aware of opportunities

Strategy 6.2 Encourage, organize, and recognize volunteers

Strategy 6.3 Keep volunteer lists up-to-date and recruit new volunteers in consideration of succession, mentoring opportunities, and long-term engagement

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Goal 7 Scout Island Nature Centre mission and programs will be proudly supported by the local community, which shares a sense of responsibility for the Centre's continuance

Strategy 7.1 The SINC Committee will seek public input on management plans and communicate those plans to the public.

Strategy 7.2 Increase support of the Nature Centre by increasing WL Field Naturalists membership and by establishing a group of community supporters "Friends of Scout Island"

Strategy 7.3 Support community partnerships that promote nature appreciation, education and/or assist with the appropriate maintenance and development of Scout Island Nature Centre

NATURE EDUCATION GOALS

Nature education programs have been offered by Scout Island Nature Centre since 1977 and education programming continues to be the focus of Nature Centre activities. School programs are held throughout the year, and, over the years, summer programs have been enjoyed by thousands of children.



EARLY LEARNING/SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Goal 8 Nature education programs for children will continue to be a major focus of Scout Island Nature Centre and will be innovative, well attended, responsive to community needs, and financially self-sustaining

Strategy 8.1 Continue to offer innovative outdoor education programs for school children and teachers

Strategy 8.2 Provide support to school district, private and First Nations' schools to integrate nature education into their curricula for kindergarten to grade 12

Strategy 8.3 Develop and support nature education programs for specific groups of students such as Nature Kindergarten, early learning/early childhood education, outdoor classes for specific school classes or age groups, and independent studies including home school

Strategy 8.4 Continue to offer the popular summer nature education programs for children

Strategy 8.5 All educational programs will be financially self-sustaining using fees, grants, and other financial sources, such as partnerships for targeted programs

ADULT EDUCATION

Goal 9 Scout Island Nature Centre will continue to be a venue or focus for adult nature education and natural history programs offered to the public by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and invited representatives from other organizations

Strategy 9.1 Increase nature education for adult audiences; particularly related to bird and plant identification, and wildlife and nature appreciation at the Nature Centre

- *Adult education could be in the form of natural history presentations, workshops, and organized/guided tours*
- *Continue to support and promote the “Ask a Naturalist” program available on the Scout Island Nature Centre website and Facebook page*

Strategy 9.2 Work collaboratively with First Nations, Elder College, the Social Planning Council and/or other community partners to develop nature-oriented programs for target audiences

Strategy 9.3 Consider holding Scout Island Community Event days with natural history and Indigenous traditional use topics

Strategy 9.4 Continue to support expert scientists/naturalists and First Nation traditional knowledge keepers/speakers for public presentations at the Nature Centre, organized by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists or Scout Island Nature Centre

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Goal 10 First Nations’ traditional knowledge and perspectives of nature will be incorporated into nature education programs and infrastructure and will be developed in cooperation with and approval by local First Nations’ people

Strategy 10.1 Continue regular communication with First Nations representatives, especially those of the Williams Lake First Nation, to ensure that the development of programming and infrastructure is reflective and inclusive of Indigenous perspectives of nature and traditional uses of plants and animals

NATURE INTERPRETATION RESOURCES

Scout Island Nature Centre is well-known as a site where children and adults come to learn about nature. The displays in the Nature House have been visited by innumerable school children and have been a source of education and inspiration for multiple generations of visitors. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists continue to work on developing resources that document and share the natural history of the area and are readily available to the public. Ongoing development of displays and resources inside the Nature House itself, and outdoors on the Nature Centre grounds will continue to reflect SINC values, will be accessible by the public, and will continue to be known and sought out by those interested in and excited about local natural history.



Goal 11 Scout Island Nature House will continue to be a principal natural history interpretation centre for the Cariboo-Chilcotin and present natural history information that is broad-ranging, informative, and inspiring, using a variety of methods to engage the public

Strategy 11.1 Continue to provide informative and publicly interesting natural history displays in the Nature House

Strategy 11.2 Develop and implement a plan for adding, rotating, updating, and modernizing Nature House displays

- *Evaluate current displays in terms of effectiveness, public interest, and enhancement potentials*
- *Update and add new displays that encourage on-going public interest*
- *Implement effective ways to incorporate Indigenous languages and knowledge in displays*

- *Consider and implement opportunities for rotating small displays*
- *Provide digital or recorded audio information at selected displays, such as may be available through QR code scans*
- *Include both static and dynamic displays*

Strategy 11.3 Maintain and promote a small bookstore of key natural history books in the Nature House

Strategy 11.4 Maintain and update as appropriate, a library of natural history and biological books in the Nature House with selected books available for short-term loan to the public

- *Evaluate current collection for use and pertinence*
- *Establish a process for adding resources to the library and for managing library loans*

Strategy 11.5 Prepare, update, and make publicly available, natural history guides to plants, animals, and ecosystems of Scout Island Nature Centre and the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. Work with Williams Lake First Nation to develop guides to traditional use plants of the Nature Centre

Strategy 11.6 Make publicly available in digital or printed form, information on natural history viewing opportunities at Scout Island Nature Centre and in the local area

Strategy 11.7 The Williams Lake Field Naturalists will assist staff and volunteers to be well informed about natural history information sources for the Cariboo-Chilcotin

Strategy 11.8 Use social and traditional media to inform the local community about nature awareness and interpretation resources at the Nature House and on Nature Centre grounds

Goal 12 The Nature House will be welcoming and readily accessible to the public

Strategy 12.1 Keep the Nature House open for visitors as long and as consistently as possible, with an advertised schedule for hours of operation

Strategy 12.2 Make available a visitor guide to the Nature House and Nature Centre grounds

Strategy 12.3 Add appropriate Indigenous symbols and language to Nature House interior to create multicultural welcoming

Strategy 12.4 Use the Nature House effectively as a nature interpretation and meeting place for the community, including other conservation or nature-education groups, with a discretionary use fee

Goal 13 The grounds of Scout Island Nature Centre will contain a variety of nature interpretation signage and opportunities for guided or self-directed viewing

Strategy 13.1 Develop and update as necessary a long-term plan for placement of outdoor interpretive signs and displays including natural history and Indigenous traditional use topics

Strategy 13.2 Develop sign content that is relevant, interesting, up-to-date and portrayed in a consistent and accessible style

Strategy 13.3 Develop Secwépemc traditional use interpretive signs in conjunction with Williams Lake First Nation

Strategy 13.4 When appropriate, enhance or replace traditional signs with place-based digital information such as could be accessible through visitor QR code scan

Strategy 13.5 Avoid placing an unnecessarily large number of signs or unnecessarily large sized signs; group signs primarily on sites with other viewing or resting structures whenever possible; ensure signs do not obstruct nature viewing opportunities

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Scout Island Nature Centre provides an invaluable wild space within the City of Williams Lake and visitors have identified the value of interacting with nature in an uninterrupted way. The trails and features at the Nature Centre (shown in Map 2) enable these interactions and provide continued opportunity for education and access. Ensuring safe places, non-discriminating access to most features, well-kept facilities, as well as current and welcoming content in displays and programming, will keep visitors returning to the site, and the value of nature education close to the hearts of area residents.



Map 2: Scout Island Trails and Features

Goal 14 Trails, facilities, and infrastructure on Scout Island Nature Centre will be maintained in good condition, be safe for public use, accommodate universal access needs where possible, and invite public visitation of Scout Island Nature Centre lands and the Nature House

Strategy 14.1 Develop a plan that designates all trails in terms of accessibility

- Define trail designations in accordance with design standards and appropriate use
- Explore the option of maintaining 'wild trails'
- Ensure trails are established to complement the natural landscape and keep areas as natural as possible

- *Ensure that fully accessible trails are constructed and maintained to meet or exceed BC Parks designated standards*

Strategy 14.2 Work with the City, via the established joint Scout Island Advisory Committee (see Strategy 1.2), on construction and maintenance of trails

Strategy 14.3 Repair and replacement of boardwalks must consider future climate events, particularly flooding, and be designed and built to withstand these events as much as possible

Strategy 14.4 Seek funding sources such as “adopt a trail” to support trail maintenance and enhancement

Strategy 14.5 Outdoor displays and signs will be kept in good condition and regularly maintained to present natural history information pertinent to Scout Island. This will be achieved by developing and implementing a maintenance plan for all outdoor interpretive displays and signage

Strategy 14.6 Continue to implement FireSmart guidelines for density of trees, shrubs, and other fuels near the Nature House, Caretaker’s House, and Block House buildings

Strategy 14.7 Prevent bicycles, horses, and motorized vehicles (other than those required by people with disabilities) from using the trails

Strategy 14.8 Develop and update (at least annually) a prioritized list of infrastructure, construction, and maintenance projects

Goal 15 Scout Island Nature Centre lands and facilities have minimal risk of being unacceptably damaged by public use

Strategy 15.1 Address increased access and visitor usage through mitigation measures to minimize risks to Scout Island habitats and infrastructure

Strategy 15.2 Develop a plan to ensure that trails and facilities are constructed and maintained to minimize damage to adjacent land and vegetation

Strategy 15.3 Manage traffic speed along the causeway road for the safety of children, pedestrians, and wildlife

Strategy 15.4 Ensure Scout Island security measures are in place, operating, and maintained at Nature Centre access points (especially the causeway and Nekw7usem bridge)

Goal 16 The Nature House building is maintained in good condition and improvements are made in a timely manner as required

Strategy 16.1 Nature House condition and infrastructure needs are assessed on a regular basis by staff and the SINC Committee

Strategy 16.2 Regular janitorial services are in place for the Nature House

Strategy 16.2 Ensure the Nature House, particularly the main floor, is as accessible as possible with consideration of the constraints of the original building structure

Goal 17 Additional Scout Island Nature Centre Infrastructure (caretaker house, block house, etc.) are also maintained in good working order

ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

The value of Scout Island Nature Centre's role as an educational and interpretative resource is inextricably linked to its integrity as a nature sanctuary. Maintaining the ecological integrity of the island, in a way that reflects the values of the Nature Trust of BC, is a critical role that the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and Scout Island Nature Centre staff will continue.

Goal 18 The ecological integrity of Scout Island natural ecosystems will be protected or enhanced to meet the Nature Trust of BC's (NTBC) mission as well as the values of enriched nature education and viewing

Strategy 18.1 Maintain vegetation on Scout Island Nature Centre lands (NTBC property) as natural as possible while still encouraging compatible visitor uses; minimize activities that expose mineral soil or initiate soil erosion

Strategy 18.2 Live trees and shrubs will not be cut or removed unless necessary for public safety, ecosystem conservation, or FireSmart treatments, consistent with the lease agreement between the City of Williams Lake and the NTBC; non-destructive trimming may be necessary for Nature Centre operation

Strategy 18.3 Develop a habitat management plan that documents and maps the principal habitats of SINCC, including the marsh; and establishes conservation and/or restoration goals and approaches for each habitat

Strategy 18.4 Work with the City of Williams Lake to maintain the current width of causeway road, providing pullouts as necessary, and maintain causeway vegetation as natural as possible



Strategy 18.5 Work with the City of Williams Lake to maintain the current width of the boat launch road and the present boat launch pad

Strategy 18.6 Maintain an arboretum of plants native to the Cariboo-Chilcotin region for planting on Nature Centre lands

Strategy 18.7 Monitor the impacts of visitor use on natural habitats and wildlife, and develop strategies to minimize threats from visitor overuse

Strategy 18.8 Inform the public as appropriate about measures in place to protect or enhance natural habitats

Strategy 18.9 Place signs at strategic points to restrict boating access to the marsh except for research or ecosystem enhancement purposes

Strategy 18.10 Work with the City to ensure that the Land Act Section 16 map reserve (see Appendix 6) is recognized and followed

Goal 19 Control invasive plant species on Scout Island Nature Centre lands

Strategy 19.1 Remove invasive plants by manual or biological control methods on Nature Centre lands in cooperation with the City of Williams Lake, the Cariboo Regional District, and other organizations as appropriate

Strategy 19.2 Encourage the City and other landowners adjacent to Scout Island to control invasive plant species and prevent their dispersal to the Nature Centre

Goal 20 Continue work to restore disturbed habitats and areas of non-native vegetation

Strategy 20.1 Continue planting of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants in areas dominated by non-native plant species, except currently existing lawn areas adjacent to the beach, caretaker's house and Nature House

Strategy 20.2 Avoid planting non-native species except where necessary for erosion control, invasive plant control, or other ecosystem enhancement purposes. If necessary, use only non-native species that are not invasive and have limited persistence

Strategy 20.3 Establish native plant gardens in areas of seeded domestic grasses, except currently existing lawn areas adjacent to the beach, caretaker's house, and Nature House

Goal 21 Protect Scout Island Nature Centre trees and other vegetation from extensive damage caused by wildlife, especially beavers

Goal 22 The Scout Island administrator will support Williams Lake Field Naturalists efforts as requested to contribute to the conservation and promotion of other natural areas in the Williams Lake area

PROMOTION AND TOURISM

The Nature Centre is an important asset for the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo-Chilcotin Region. It is one of several nature centres in BC and is particularly noteworthy as it is based in a relatively small community. Scout Island Nature Centre has been designated by the Province of BC as a 'Wildlife Viewing Site' because of the unique opportunity for learning and teaching about nature in an urban setting. It has become a destination for tourists and resident alike and continues to attract people, as it has for years, to experience nature and enjoy wildlife watching opportunities.

Goal 23 Promote the services, programs, and natural values that the Nature Centre provides while encouraging a sustainable level of use by the public

Strategy 23.1 Increase the sense of community ownership of the Nature Centre by the residents of Williams Lake and surrounding area

- *Encourage residents of Williams Lake to volunteer for various jobs at the Nature Centre*
- *Host bi-annual community work-bees open to the public*
- *Make Scout Island Nature Centre a welcoming place that promotes inclusiveness and diversity*

Strategy 23.2 Improve communication to the local and wider public about the Nature Centre using a variety of methods, including the Nature Centre website (scoutisland.ca), traditional print, and social media

Strategy 23.3 Support other natural history and environmental stewardship organizations in the region while maintaining Scout Island Nature Centre as a distinct entity that focuses on nature education and appreciation

Goal 24 Consistent use of the Scout Island Nature Centre logo and messaging will create a recognizable 'brand' for the centre

Strategy 24.1 Promote this brand through the sale of T-shirts and hats (including sizes for children)

Goal 25 Work collaboratively with local tourism organizations (eg. Tourism Discovery Centre, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association) to promote Scout Island Nature Centre

Strategy 25.1 Provide tourism organizations with a regular newsletter on Scout Island Nature Centre events and activities to keep staff up to date (see Goal 26)

Goal 26 Create a seasonal newsletter regarding Scout Island Nature Centre programming, activities, and recent/upcoming events. This newsletter will be shared via social media, email distribution lists, as well as to partner and external organizations

APPENDICES

1. History of Scout Island Nature Centre
2. The Nature Trust of BC
3. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists
4. Lease agreement between the Nature Trust of BC (previously Second Century Fund) and the City of Williams Lake
5. Sublease agreement between the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists
6. Marsh Management Plan and Land Act Reserves
7. Licence of Occupation
8. Results of the 2021 Community Survey

Appendix 1: History of Scout Island Nature Centre

The land now known as Scout Island consists of two small islands (approximately 2.2 ha and 0.6 ha) and one larger island (approximately 8.3 ha), which was previously a peninsula extending into the west end of Williams Lake but is now separated by a drainage channel.

Scout Island and surrounding areas have abundant evidence of First Nation's occupation, including house pits, cache pits, and stone points and flakes. Archaeological evidence indicates that Secwépemc people and their ancestors (Plateau Pithouse Tradition people) occupied the west end of the lake for 6,000 years or more before Europeans arrived. A vibrant culture had developed and approximately 350 people occupied the lake area in 1850. When Euro-American settlers arrived in 1860, present Scout Island was part of a principal Secwépemc village site known, according to Secwépemc elder Jean William, as *Yucwt*. From 1820 to 1860, the people of this village traded furs and salmon for guns and other European goods with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Alexandria and Fort Thompson. The hereditary chief of the people living at *Yucwt* from 1840 to 1862 was *Gwesemiyst* (spelling provided by Jean William and Cecilia DeRose), known to the fur traders as William, and the lake of his people as William's lake. Present Scout Island and adjacent land on the north side of the marsh were important salmon and ling cod fishing sites for the people of *Yucwt*.

Euro-American settlers serving the Cariboo gold-rush arrived in the Williams Lake area in late 1859 and quickly pre-empted and purchased nearly all grass and meadow lands of the valley, including the site of *Yucwt*¹. The Secwépemc people were forced off their village and fishing site in contravention of colonial law. By 1880 William Pinchbeck owned most of the valley at the west end of the lake, including what is now Scout Island, and built a home on the present Stampede grounds. When Pinchbeck died in 1893 with a large debt that he was unable to pay, his farm was put up for sale by the Western Canadian Ranching Company for payment of debt. Robert Borland purchased the farm, including present Scout Island, in 1899. The farm became known as the Borland Ranch and the peninsula that is now Scout Island continued to be a hay field and pasture.

The coming of the railroad created major changes at the west end of the lake. The Pacific Great Eastern (PGE) Railroad purchased the Borland Ranch in 1912 for its planned rail terminus. The rail line reached Williams Lake in 1919, stockyards were quickly built, and the settlement grew rapidly. Williams Lake village was officially incorporated in 1929.

The largest of the two small islands near the east end of the peninsula was given to the village of Williams Lake by MLA Rod Mackenzie in 1933 for use by the Boy Scouts. The island soon became known as "Scout Island". The smaller of the two islands was protected from development in 1947 by a U.R.E.P. (Use, Recreation and Enjoyment of the Public) reserve.

¹ For further details on history of Scout Island see: Steen, O. 2019. The Scout Island Story, From First People's Home to Nature Centre. Williams Lake Field Naturalists Society, Williams Lake, BC

In early 1966, the Town of Williams Lake purchased the peninsula for a proposed public recreation area from the PGE for \$1.00. The boundary of the town was extended to include the peninsula. In 1965/66, the Town constructed a drainage channel, with a weir to control flow, across the base of the peninsula, separating it from the mainland, and also built a gravel dam between the mainland and the north side of the new island. The dam restricted lake outflow to the new drainage channel across the base of the peninsula. Together, the drainage channel, weir, and dam were designed to control water levels in the lake. A road was built on the dam. The resulting causeway provided vehicle access to the new island.

In addition to the drainage channel and causeway, the City made several changes to the new island. A campground was constructed and was operational by 1969. Parking for the campground was in the northwest area of the island, west of the present Nature House. A cinder block building was constructed to contain showers and toilets for the campers. It now serves primarily as a storage building for the Nature Centre. The City moved an old library building of manufactured logs from the present City Hall area to the new island to serve as a residence for a caretaker of the campground. It is now home for the Nature Centre caretaker. The City also built a sand beach on the southeast side of the new island. Parking was adjacent to the beach. The first City water well was on the largest island and was operational by 1971. Two more wells were soon added, with water lines to the town buried in the new causeway.

In 1970, the Town planned to fill in parts of the marsh to expand the area of the campground and parking lot. Concerned residents, including Anna Roberts, appealed to the Town to preserve the marsh. As a result of public opposition to the plan, the newly formed Cariboo Regional District requested the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) to conduct a study of the marsh and assess its value for wildlife. R.D. Harris, a biologist with the CWS, submitted a report in 1972² which concluded that the marsh presented a unique opportunity for teaching and learning about nature in an urban setting. The report recommended that no further encroachment of the marsh be allowed and that the campground be removed and a nature house be built. Harris recommended that the BC Second Century Fund (now the Nature Trust of BC) be contacted for possible purchase of the islands to protect them and the marsh from further development.

In response to the Harris report and input from many others including Anna Roberts and Dr. Bert Brink of UBC, the Second Century Fund purchased most of the larger island (previous peninsula) as well as the larger of the two small islands ("Scout Island") in 1973 from the Town for \$99,000. A surveyed lot (D.L. 7045) was given back to the town to accommodate its wells and City water pumping stations. The City continued ownership of the road right-of-way on the causeway. The remainder of the purchased land was leased to the Town for 99 years for \$1.00 per year. The purchase monies were placed in a trust fund with the Town for purposes of developing the islands as a natural area. Conditions of the purchase included managing the

²Harris, R.D. 1972. The Williams Lake Environmental Complex – A proposal for guidance of the committee. Unpubl. Report by Canadian Wildlife Service to Town of Williams Lake.

area as a natural area and using the purchase funds to construct a nature house. The picnic area, swimming beach, and small boat launch were approved as intensively managed areas but no expansion of these areas was permitted. The campsite was required to be removed within five years of the purchase. The purchased area was to remain a public place to enjoy and learn about nature. The area was named the “Scout Island Environmental Complex”.

Initial development of the Environment Complex was led by a group of volunteer citizens formed by the Town in 1973. The committee planned and directed construction of the Nature House, placed a culvert through the causeway to allow some lake outflow through the marsh, and planted trees and shrubs on the causeway and adjacent to the marsh. The committee was disbanded in 1977 after completion of the Nature House structure, which used most of the original purchase funds.

After the committee was disbanded, the Williams Lake Field Naturalists made a proposal to the Town Council to form a committee to take over management of the Environmental Complex on behalf of the Town and the Nature Trust of BC (new name for Second Century Fund). The proposal also specified that the Field Naturalists would develop nature education programs for school children and the public.

The proposal was accepted by Town Council and in March 1977, the Williams Lake Field Naturalists signed a sublease agreement with the Town to manage the Environmental Complex, now called Scout Island Nature Centre. Terms of the sublease mirror and are consistent with the main lease between the Town and the Nature Trust. The board of directors of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists was designated as the Scout Island Management Committee.

To guide management of the marsh and adjacent lands, the Field Naturalists contracted Gary Runka to prepare a report guiding development of the marsh. The report, completed in 1980³, described the very significant ecological values of the Nature Centre and marsh, especially because of its location within an urban setting. The report also recommended that a proposal be submitted by the Town and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists to replace the Section 12 Land Act U.R.E.P. map reserve covering the marsh and west end of the lake (See Appendix 6) with a Section 11 Land Act reserve with a clearer focus on reserve objectives. In response to the Runka report, the Town and the Field Naturalists jointly submitted a “Marsh Management Plan” in 1983⁴ to the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing. The application for a reserve was approved by the Ministry in January 1984 through Order-in-Council #008 as Reserve #84680 with a 30 year term. In 2014, the Section 11 Land Act reserve was replaced by a Section 16 withdrawal from disposition (see Appendix 6).

³Runka, G.G. 1980. Scout Island Nature Centre. Conservation of its wetlands: impact of surrounding land and water use. Unpubl. Report prepared by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. G. G. Land Sense Ltd.

⁴Williams Lake Field Naturalists and City of Williams Lake. 1983. Scout Island Nature Centre Marsh Management Plan. Unpubl document.

When the Williams Lake Field Naturalists took over day-to-day management of Scout Island Nature Centre in 1977, very little infrastructure was in place other than the Scout Island Nature House shell and a foot trail with a small bridge to the original “Scout Island”. Several infrastructure and educational improvements were quickly made, mostly by Williams Lake Field Naturalist volunteers. Under the dedicated leadership of Fred McMechan, several new trails were built, existing trails were improved, some to fully accessible standards, bridges were built, the old campground shower and toilet building was renovated, wildlife viewing structures and interpretive signs were constructed, a ditch to bring water from the main drainage channel into the marsh was constructed, a berm was built across the old campground parking lot, and trees native to BC were planted on the old campground. Improvements were also made to the caretaker’s house. Many education displays were built in the Nature House, primarily by Anna and Gina Roberts but also other volunteers, turning the log shell into a vibrant interpretive centre. Several structural changes were made to the Nature House in order to accommodate school and pre-school classes and to improve accessibility.

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists initiated a nature education program quickly after taking on management of Scout Island Nature Centre. The program included teacher-naturalists, education coordinators, an administrator (executive director), and university student summer teachers. The first teacher-naturalist (Jean Wellburn) was hired in 1978, and taught the very successful “Spiders, snakes, and frogs” nature classes for children. In 1989, the “Discovery preschool” was initiated and continued until 2015, led primarily by Margaret Onneken. The preschool was discontinued when the school district, supported by Nature Centre staff, started the Nature Kindergarten at Scout Island Nature Centre in 2016. Sue Hemphill was the education coordinator from 2003 until 2017 when she became and still remains the executive director of the Nature Centre. Anna Roberts was an inspiration, teacher, and mentor to all.

In 1988, Scout Island Nature Centre received the Minister’s Environmental Award from BC Ministry of Environment and Parks for the nature education programs for children. The Nature Centre has been recognized by the Ministry of Environment’s Wildlife Watch Program as one of the principal wildlife viewing sites in British Columbia.

Appendix 2: The Nature Trust of British Columbia

The Scout Island Nature Centre property is largely owned by The Nature Trust of BC. It is managed by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists under a long-term lease agreement between The Nature Trust and the City of Williams Lake and a sublease agreement between the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. The Nature Trust of British Columbia is one of the oldest and largest private, non-profit charitable land conservation organizations in the province. It recently celebrated 50 years of conservation. Since its first purchases in 1972, NTBC has acquired more than 500 properties covering 70,000 ha. The Nature Trust conserves critical habitats and other areas of ecological significance and scenic beauty throughout BC.

In the Cariboo Region, the Nature Trust has acquired 19 properties covering 895 ha. Scout Island was one of the earliest properties acquired in the region and, in fact, in the province with the majority of the land purchased in 1973 (Properties 1 and 2 Appendix 6, Map 2). Two additional properties were purchased in 1982 and 1989 (properties 4 and 3, respectively, Appendix 6, Map 2). This land is managed in accordance with the Mission of The Nature Trust which is to conserve BC's biological diversity through securement and management of ecologically significant lands.

More information on The Nature Trust can be found on their website: www.naturetrust.bc.ca

Appendix 3: The Williams Lake Field Naturalists

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists club is a not-for-profit society formed in 1971. It is one of more than 50 member clubs of BC Nature (formerly Federation of BC Naturalists) and was formed to provide members with opportunities to share nature awareness and enjoyment activities. The Field Naturalists offer outdoor nature hikes and viewing, natural history presentations and courses by members and invited guests, nature conservation advocacy, and a newsletter (“Muskrat”) and website (<https://williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca>).

In addition to managing natural history activities for members, the board of directors of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists Society serves as the Scout Island Nature Centre Management Committee, which directs management of Scout Island Nature Centre according to the sublease agreement with City. Day-to-day management of the Nature Centre education and other programs is largely delegated by the Committee to a Nature Centre administrator or executive director, hired by the Committee. The administrator, education coordinator, and other employed staff offer nature education programs at Scout Island Nature Centre for more than 200 school classes each year.

The Field Naturalists cooperate with the City of Williams Lake on decisions regarding land and infrastructure management and refer to the Nature Trust of BC for direction when needed.

Members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists contribute thousands of hours of volunteer effort each year towards operations of Scout Island Nature Centre.

Appendix 4: Lease agreement between the Nature Trust of BC (previously Second Century Fund) and the City of Williams Lake

This lease was first signed in 1973 (for properties 1 and 2, Map 1). Additional leases were signed in 1982 following the acquisition of parcel 4 and in 1989 following the acquisition of parcel 3 (Map 1). This lease agreement outlines the responsibilities of the City toward the management and care of the property owned by The Nature Trust of BC. In this agreement, the Lessor is The Nature Trust of BC and the Lessee is the City of Williams Lake. The term of the lease is 99 years. Some of the major points in this agreement are as follows:

1. The Lessee covenants to pay taxes and to pay rates for water, electric lights, gas and telephone.
2. And to repair; and to keep up fences; and not to cut down timber.
3. And that it will leave premises in good repair.
4. And that it will not carry on any business that shall be deemed a nuisance on the premises.
5. Under "General" items, the following clauses are included:
 - Clause #2. "The Lessee will, at all times during the term of the lease, maintain and preserve in good order and condition the grounds of the premises, and carefully preserve the trees, bushes, shrubs, plants and flowers now growing and which may, at any time during the said term, grow therein, from waste, injury or destruction".
 - Clause #4 "The said premises shall be preserved and/or developed by the Lessee as a site of ecological interest for the use, enjoyment and benefit of the people of British Columbia. The sole decision of the Lessor shall determine whether the said premises are being preserved and/or developed as aforesaid and such decision shall be binding upon the parties hereto."
6. Clause 5(b) of the 1973 lease shows that " the Lessee may continue during the term hereof to use: (i) the present public swimming beach and facilities attendant thereto; (ii) the present picnic facilities; (iii) the present small boat launching site."

Appendix 5: Sublease agreement between the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists

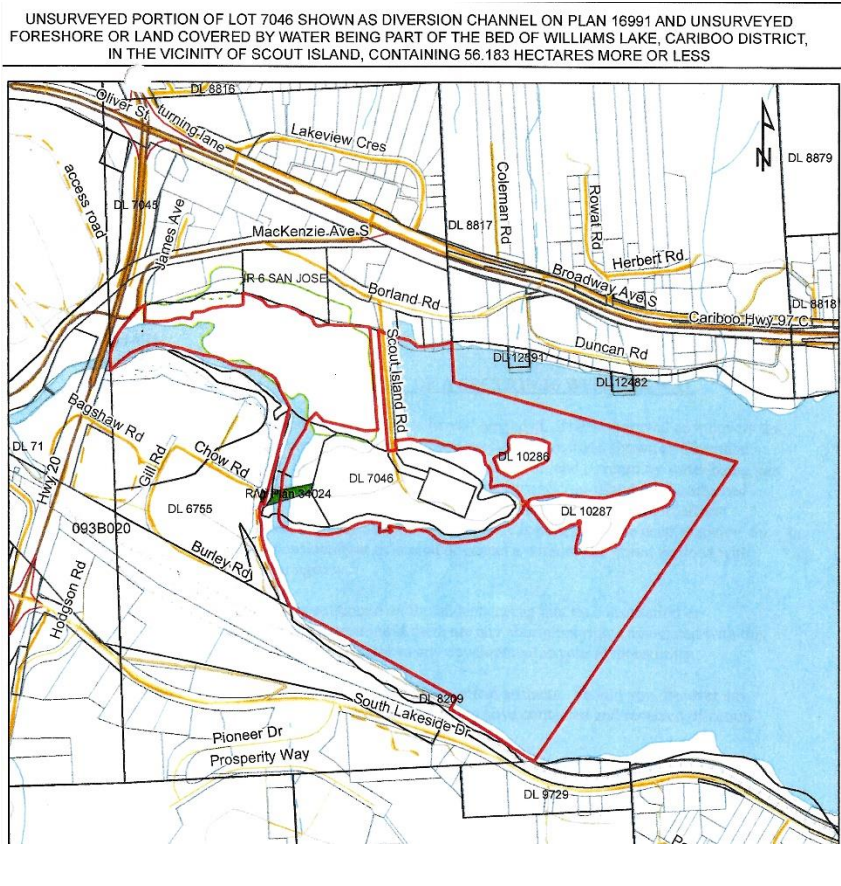
This agreement was signed in 1978 and 1982. Major points include:

1. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists shall perform all the covenants and conditions contained in the main lease between The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Williams Lake.
2. The City of Williams Lake is responsible for the maintenance of the picnic facilities, beach and boat launching site.

Appendix 6: Marsh Management Plan and Land Act Reserves

On January 4, 1984, the Province of BC established, through Order in Council, Reserve #84680 under Section 11 of the Land Act for purposes of recreation, conservation, and habitat protection for a period of 30 years. Application for this reserve was made jointly by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and the Town of Williams Lake and supported by a jointly prepared Marsh Management Plan. Objectives of the reserve are contained in the Marsh Management Plan. As recommended by G.G. Runka Land Sense Ltd, the Section 11 reserve replaced a previous Section 12 Land Act map reserve in order to better define conservation objectives of the reserve.

The Land Act Section 11 Reserve expired in January 2014. At that time the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations replaced the Section 11 reserve with a Land Act Section 16 map reserve # R145001 for as long as needed, that is for an indefinite time period. Area of the map reserve is approximately 61.3 ha (Map A6.1). The Section 16 map reserve was established on behalf of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and has the same area and objectives as the former Section 11 Reserve. The entire area of the reserve is withdrawn from disposal.



Map A6.1 Approved Land Act Section 16 map reserve

The Marsh Management Plan, on which the Section 11 and Section 16 reserves are based, outlines long-term management goals and acceptable uses of the marsh and lake within the mapped Land Act reserve area:

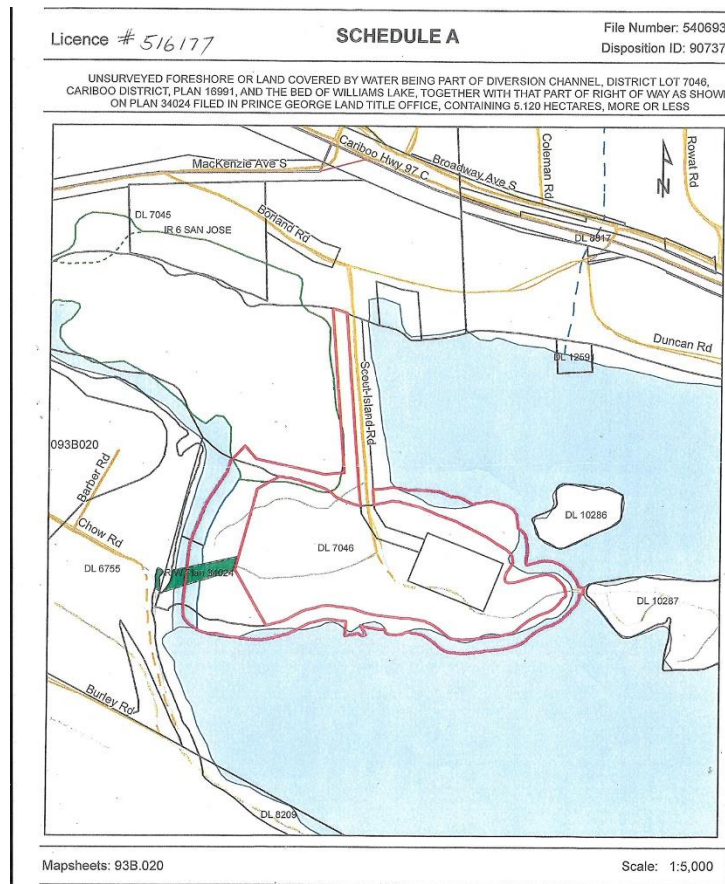
1. Nature interpretation programs and facilities should continue at Scout Island Nature Centre.
2. Plans for construction projects on Crown land should be approved by the BC Ministry of Forests, Land, and Resource Operations and Rural Development.
3. A safe swimming area should be demarcated in the lake adjacent to the Scout Island beach.
4. The present boat launch should be maintained but not expanded, as per the lease agreement with the Nature Trust of BC.
5. Ice skating and cross-country skiing should be encouraged on the lake but not in the marsh. Snowmobiling should not be permitted anywhere on Scout Island or in the marsh and should be discouraged within the reserve area.
6. Boating speed limit in the reserve area should be 8 km/hr and water skiing should not be allowed in the reserve area.
7. The following developments should be considered:
 - a. improvement of water flow in the marsh by additional culverts in the causeway;
 - b. construction and maintenance of trails and boardwalks on the Nature Centre
 - c. introduction and maintenance of native plants;
 - d. habitat improvements to encourage a wide variety of native wildlife

Appendix 7: License of Occupation

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists holds a license of occupation for existing structures built on crown land at the west end of the main island and below the high-water mark around the entire main island. Any new structures built in this area will require approval under this license.

In April 2004, License of Occupation (LoO) #740676, totalling 0.136 ha, was issued to the Williams Lake Field Naturalists for five parcels of land to construct and maintain a wildlife viewing platform, elevated boardwalk into the edge of the marsh (Otter Point boardwalk), a log bridge to Otter Point, and two docks for school classes, one near the diversion channel and the other on the west side of the causeway. The term of the license was 10 years.

Following expiration of LoO #740676 in April 2014, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development (FLNRORD) issued replacement License of Occupation #516177 to the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. This LoO consolidates all Crown Land and area below high-water level around the main island (Map A7.1) and the west side of the causeway within a single approved license. The east side of the causeway was not included due to potential risks to turtle nesting habitat. Within this area, a management plan was submitted to describe permitted constructions and actions. This LoO allows up to five future constructions without requiring a separate license of occupation for each construction.



Map A7.1 License of Occupation 516177 (boundaries in red)

The management plan submitted for LoO #516177 was amended by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists in March 2016 to include plans for one approved proposed development and to provide a list of existing built structures that had not been approved in the original LoO.

The amended Management Plan states that the Williams Lake Field Naturalists will:

- 1) Manage and protect the natural values of the License of Occupation area
- 2) Provide opportunities for the public to visit and enjoy these areas.
- 3) Manage and maintain the present structures and future new ones
- 4) If structures are planned in these areas, consult with appropriate government agencies.
- 5) not use pressure treated wood and not operate any machinery in the marsh
- 6) not construct more than five new structures, without obtaining prior, written consent from FLNRORD

Approved structures added to the Management Plan which were not one of the five structures included in the original License of Occupation included:

- Osprey nest pole:
- Elevated board walkway along the Bulrush Trail
- Log foot bridge between main island and smaller far island.
- Observation bird blind
- Central and eastern portions of the elevated board walkway along the Willow Trail

The first new structure added under the five permitted under the License of Occupation was the new elevated boardwalk along the western section of the Willow Trail.

Appendix 8: Results of the 2021 Community Survey

In spring 2021, the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, via their Scout Island Nature Centre Management Planning committee, undertook a community wide survey to help inform an update to the 2003 Management Plan for Scout Island Nature Centre (SINC). Beginning with outreach to the Williams Lake First Nation, who assisted in providing feedback to the draft survey document and distribution to community members, the committee released the online survey in early June and provided hard copy versions at the Nature House on Scout Island. Committee members assisted with survey distribution by contacting local organizations and individuals to both fill out and share the survey over the course of the month. The survey closed on June 30, 2021; in total, 283 surveys were completed.

The first section of the survey asked participants for information about themselves and their use of the Nature Centre.

74.8% people completed the survey as individuals, with 22.7% identifying as a family with children. A very small number of people (5) identified on behalf of a group.

38.3% of survey participants identified as being 65 or older; 36.9% between the ages of 46-65; 14.1% between the ages of 31-45 and 9.7% between the ages of 19-30. Very few participants identified as being in the age bracket of 15-18 or younger than 15.

When asked how often participants visited Scout Island, 26.2% answered 'once a month', 24% answered 'two or more times a week', 21.1% answered 'once a week', 20.7% answered 'less than once a month', and 8% answered 'rarely or never'.

In response to a question asking how long participants have been visiting Scout Island, 75.2% of participants indicated that they have been visiting the centre for more than 10 years. 21.2% responded that they have been visiting between 2-10 years and the small remainder of participants, less than two years. While the Nature Centre has seen an anecdotal increase in users over the past 12-18 months, presumably due to a variety of factors (COVID 19, the current closure of the Williams Lake River Valley), and this question was added by the committee to try to capture that increase, it appears that most survey respondents have been long time visitors to Scout Island.

The first long answer question of the survey asked participants what they like best about visiting Scout Island. In an overwhelming response, many participants indicated that walking the trails was what they liked best (129/271 responses); enjoying nature and experiencing wildlife was next (126/271 responses), and was followed by bird watching (72/271 responses). Throughout the answers, survey respondents clearly indicated that the ability to view nature, to have a quiet and wild space to access and move through an intact natural environment, was critical to their enjoyment of the island.

The next survey question asked what facilities people use when they are at Scout Island. The majority of participants identified the top six facilities utilized. Of 277 responses, 96.8%

responded that they use the walking trails; 68% use the swimming beach; 64% access the boat launch; 62.8% utilize the outdoor displays; 59.7% use the picnic area, and; 56.7% use the Nature House displays.

In a question asking participants why they visit Scout Island, of 277 responses 92.8% indicated that they visit to view and enjoy nature. An additional top three responses include walking and exercise (84.8%), birdwatching (71.1%), and enjoying quiet time (71.1%).

When asked how important survey participants felt Scout Island is as a walking or nature viewing area for the community, 92.4% answered 'very important'.

Participants were asked if they, their family members, or group, participate in any programs or events at Scout Island Nature Centre. Interestingly, 40.7% indicated that they don't participate in any of the programming. After this, 24.6% indicated they participated in evening public presentations and 22.8% in school programs. In discussion while reviewing the survey results, committee members wondered whether this program participation result may be a result of the COVID 19 impact on programming offered over the past year and a half (very limited and/or none compared to regular, pre-COVID programming). Or rather that the majority of people access Scout Island Nature Centre to get in touch with nature, to find solitude and quiet, and as such, the programming aspect is secondary to their independent enjoyment of the centre.

Following this, survey participants were asked how important they felt the school and other nature programs offered at Scout Island Nature Centre are to the community. 82% indicated that the programs offered are 'very important', 11.3% 'important', and the remainder between 'somewhat important' and 'no opinion'. Carrying forward the analysis from the previous question, it would appear that while not all participants themselves access the programming available at the centre, they nevertheless value its availability.

Prior to a series of long-answer questions being asked, the survey provided information regarding how the land and structures comprising Scout Island Nature Centre are owned and managed, outlining the relationships between the Nature Trust of BC, the City of Williams Lake, and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. The SINC Management Planning committee has compiled survey answers in coordination with a draft management plan framework document, so that participant input can be reflected in a way that will inform future direction. While the questions covered different aspects related to SINC, including 'specific ways Scout Island can better meet your needs', 'changes or additions to trails or other structure you would like to see', 'changes or additions to programs you would like to see', 'suggestions on how to better manage Scout Island as a nature area and wildlife sanctuary', and 'any further comments on Scout Island or its management', participant responses generally showed a great support for current management practices, a clear attachment to the wild and natural aspects of the island, and support for the staff and volunteers that have built Scout Island to what it is today. Throughout the responses there are also a variety of suggestions for improvements. Weighted

by repetition, the management planning committee will do its best to incorporate suggested changes into future goals and objectives moving forward.

An additional question acknowledged that Scout Island was a part of an ancestral Secwépemc village site, and asked if there was interest in more information about the history of Indigenous peoples and their uses of the land, plants and animals. 92.1% of respondents indicated that they would like to learn more about the Indigenous history of the island. Prompted for suggestions on how that information might be presented, there were four strong themes amongst the 199 responses. The most prominent (129/199) was that the information be displayed in some type of signage. The next suggestion was to have guided tours or organized presenters (from the Secwépemc community) share that information. Incorporation of both languages (Secwépemc and English) onto any signage was a high priority as was ensuring the information and methods of presentation developed be led by the T'exelcemc (people of the Williams Lake First Nation). The SINC Management Planning committee has initiated this process and looks forward to on-going development of this information in coordination with T'exelc staff, Elders and community members.

The SINC Management Planning committee and staff thank all who participated in the survey, and the community as a whole for its support of Scout Island Nature Centre.