

Scout Island Nature Centre Boardwalk Repairs 2020-2024

The Story of a Community Coming Together

April – July 2020 flooding damaged all of the trails at Scout Island including large sections of the boardwalks on Otter Point, the Willow trail, and the Bullrush Trail. The WL Field Naturalist volunteers worked tirelessly to save what they could of the infrastructure during the high waters that lasted into September.



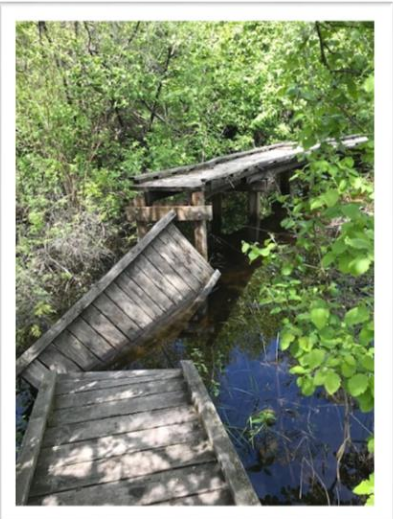
Above: Assessing the damage and salvaging where possible.



Above: The 2020 flooding of Otter Point Boardwalk.



Even before the floodwaters receded, the WL Field Naturalist directors were on site assessing the damage and what needed to be done to open up the trails to the public as soon as possible. It was during COVID, and the community was coming to Scout Island to walk, for mental relief, and to communicate with others safely, outdoors. Clean-up started immediately with the WL Field Naturalists leading the work, but many individuals and other community groups also showed up to help. Broken boardwalks were removed and others were scraped so



they were safe to walk on. We also took the step of applying for Disaster Financial Assistance from the BC Government. In the winter of 2020-2021, WL Field Naturalists lead by Sean Donahue, worked with engineer Ray Getzlaff (also working as a volunteer) and developed initial plans for repairing the boardwalks. BC Emergency Funding was made available April 2021 and the planning went into high gear. It was decided to replace the Willow Trail and Otter Point boardwalks first

with a system that uses metal screw piles as the foundation, widen the boardwalks, and add rails for safety. Otter Point was still walkable, so we started with the Willow trail. As water levels finally went down, the tearing down and removing old timbers began in the fall of 2021. This took a lot of muscle!

Early in 2022, we had detailed designs in place for how the two boardwalks would be rebuilt. Estimates of total costs were calculated (thanks to the volunteer planning crew) so that further grants could be applied for and community fundraising could begin. The estimate for the two trails was \$138,000 cash and \$38,000 in volunteer time. As of September 2022, the full amount needed for the Willow Trail was in the bank through grants and local donations.

For the Willow boardwalk replacement, we acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia (BC Disaster Relief), Jean Waite Endowment fund and the City of Williams Lake.

By late October, the screw piles were being installed.

Step by step, the work was done no matter what the weather. Some of the work days were really cold, but it was important to take advantage of the dry ground. Volunteers worked right up to snow fall in November, and just before the snow covered it, the first group went across the new Willow Trail boardwalk.



But the volunteers weren't done! The winter 2022-2023 was then spent sourcing materials and more funding so that the work on Otter Point could go ahead in 2023.



Volunteer work crew enjoying some lunch after the muddy job of removing posts!

Construction had to wait until water levels went down and the ground dried. The boardwalk was dismantled in September. Most posts came out in fairly good condition and they were donated to a



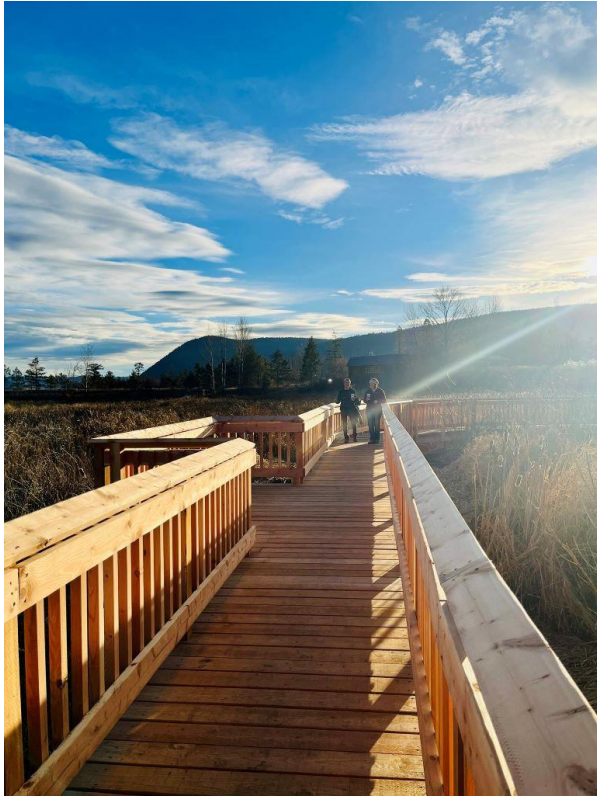
local farm. Many of the decking boards were salvageable and later incorporated into the new deck. The screw piles were put in late October and the building crew worked through November and December.

Roger Hamilton had the joy of driving the last screw.

The approaches were graveled and completed as of writing this, but thank-you signs will be mounted spring 2024. It was a huge undertaking for the WL Field Naturalist volunteers, but the community in general helped in so many ways donating funding, helping the work crew, and even delivering baked goodies.

For the Otter Point boardwalk replacement, we acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia, Williams Lake Community Forests, City of Williams Lake, (trails and habitat restoration grant), Jean Waite Endowment fund, West Fraser Truckers, Gibraltar Mines and local community donations.





People (Estimated 12 000 per year) can once again walk “through” the marsh enjoying close views of wildlife pausing to listen to the birds and look for hidden nests in the emergent vegetation. Many of the classes (100 in 2023) that visit Scout Island each year end up on either of the boardwalks learning what riparian and marsh ecosystems are observing with their eyes, their ears and their noses.



A Financial Summary for Trail Repair

Original estimates back in early 2022 were \$138,000 cash and in \$38,000 volunteer time. We **stayed within the cash budget but the volunteer time was double** the estimate.

A heartfelt thank-you to all of the volunteers and the donors.

Boardwalk	Funding Source & Amount		Spent	Volunteer
Willow Trail	BC Disaster Financial Assistance:	\$42,267		680 hours Value = \$36,053
	Trails and Habitat Restoration Grant -City of Williams Lake and Cariboo Regional District (2022)	\$7,500		
	Jean Waite Endowment (2021)	\$8,000		
	Total	\$57,767	\$53,782	
Otter Point	B.C. Community Gaming Capital Project Grant:	43,800		1157 hours Value = \$50,964
	WL Community Forest:	\$5,000		
	West Fraser Truckers	\$5,000		
	Gibraltar Mines	\$5,000		
	Local community individual donations \$7,887	\$7,887		
	\$8,000 from 2022 Jean Waite Endowment (2022)	\$8,000		
	Trails and Habitat Restoration Grant – City of Williams Lake and Cariboo Regional District (2023)	\$7,500		
	Surplus from willow trail	\$3,985		
	Total	\$86,172	\$83,418	

Note: The \$2754 remaining will be used for approaches, signage and other details.