

Gardom Pond Dam

CRD Board Update

Capital Regional District | July 2019

The following update was provided to the CRD Board on [June 12, 2019](#).

The CRD, through the Pender Island Parks and Recreation Commission (PIPRC), owns land and holds a water license on Gardom Pond on North Pender Island. The dam was created in 1978, but in 1997, was classified as a high consequence dam. The CRD holds a license on this water body along with five other residents. All of the water license holders have been on notice by the province for some time to make the dam safe.

If this dam were to breach, residents in the downstream inundation zone in the area of Razor Point could be injured, lose their property or lose their lives. Liability for this risk lies with all six license holders. This risk of a dam breach has impacted Razor Point residents in regards to selling their homes, obtaining home insurance, or obtaining building permits. The liability has also caused a great deal of stress for all the license holders.

Finding a solution has been an extremely lengthy and arduous process to help bring the six parties to consensus on a path forward. This is not a typical CRD project that the Board can consult the public on, approve and then move forward unilaterally. It must be agreed to by all the parties directly accountable who would each pay their proportionate share. It has been at least 15 years of discussions, engineering feasibility studies, options and negotiations.

Board members from last term will recall an original plan to proceed to referendum within the PIPRC service area to borrow 4/6 of the funds to remediate the dam, with the remaining five license holders paying approximately \$55,000 each towards this \$1.6 million dollar project. This plan did not proceed because the PIPRC did not support borrowing for this project as a priority. The commission proposed the current solution to decommission the dam and naturalizing the pond. This solution would bring the costs down for all involved and be accomplished without borrowing funds. The CRD Board agreed and subsequently all six license holders reached agreement and everyone signed an agreement to proceed.

The CRD consulted or engaged with the Islands Trust, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, First Nations, residents of the Razor Point Improvement District and the local fire chief. License holders do not have to pay anything as a grant for 80% of the project costs has been secured, with the balance being paid by SGI Community Works Funds, which all license holders were extremely grateful for. The dam safety branch approved the overall plan to decommission the dam and the CRD is now in receipt of an Order from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development under the Water Sustainability Act to remediate the dam by September 30, 2019. A contract has been tendered and entered into to do the work.

For more information and FAQs, please visit www.crd.bc.ca/gardom

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With regards to groundwater, the water level in the pond will be lowered by 2 meters, so the pond will not be completely drained. It may be relevant to consider that currently the water level already fluctuates one meter from summer to winter. Provincial groundwater intrinsic vulnerability mapping shows low vulnerability - hydrogeological assessments are typically done for areas of high vulnerability. The new water level will be maintained at a level that meets requirements of the National Fire Protection Association and the Fire Underwriters Survey. This will help with those seeking fire insurance for their homes. After decommissioning the dam, all five water licenses will be transferred to the CRD, who will then apply to relinquish the consolidated water license, and all risk to each party will be eliminated.

In closing, this project is now underway at the site. We did not have support from the local commission to proceed to borrow funds for a different project. We currently do not have support from our regulators to take more time and the solution that we have found meets all of our regulatory obligations, is financially reasonable, will eliminate the immediate risk to those living in the inundation zone and was reached through a consensus building process of the water license holders, who are directly responsible.

[View the webcast](#) of the **June 12 Board meeting**

- Agenda item 19-604: Delegation to Save Razor Point's Water Organization (25:23)
- Agenda item 5.8: CRD Climate Action 2018 Report (1:21:35).