



Making a difference...together

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Gardom Pond Meeting
Pender Island

Dear Residents:

RE: Gardom Pond Dam Decommissioning

Thank you for coming today. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend in person, so would like to share important information on this project to outline why returning the Dam to its natural state is the best solution and the importance of proceeding with this work. I also want to take this opportunity to address raised concerns about this project and reaffirm the Capital Regional District's (CRD) commitment to decommission the dam and naturalize Gardom Pond.

As most of you know, this project has its origin dating back to 1997 when the BC Dam Safety Branch classified the Downstream Failure Consequence as "High" and that the responsibility for this dam, including all related costs, lies with the six water license holders.

Failure of the dam could occur in the case of an extreme rain or seismic event in the area. Such a flooding event would have a significant impact to the people and homes below the dam. Given this risk, people in the impacted area are having trouble selling their homes and have also experienced problems acquiring permits for work on their homes or properties.

As a result of this high risk, several analyses of the dam were performed, which showed that the total cost of work to remediate the dam, in addition to the downstream work, would range from \$1.3 - \$1.5 million. Given the high cost, a less costly alternate solution was considered, that being to decommission the dam and naturalize the pond. This work will return the pond to its natural water level, which was modified in 1978 when a developer excavated the marshy area to deepen the depression and constructed the dam, thereby raising the water level.

In October 2016, the CRD Board approved a plan to pursue remediation of the dam that would require a large portion of the cost of the project to be paid by the electorate, requiring a referendum. The content and potential outcomes of the referendum were debated and, in November 2016, the Pender Island Parks and Recreation Commission opted instead to pass a motion to request the Electoral Areas Director to bring an alternate option to the CRD Board, that being to decommission the dam. This meant the cost for the project would fall to the six water licence holders. This recommendation was made to the Electoral Area Services Committee in March 2017 and was then approved by the Board in April 2017. Following that direction, the dam decommissioning concept was developed over several years in consultation with stakeholders.

In December 2018, the CRD announced receipt of \$460,000 in federal and provincial grant funding through the National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) for the decommissioning of Gardom Pond Dam.

There have been concerns raised on the groundwater levels, firefighting concerns and general environmental impacts.

Groundwater concerns: The provincial groundwater intrinsic vulnerability map shows a low vulnerability for contamination due to physical characteristics of the land and subsurface for the majority of the area.

Firefighting concerns: The dam decommissioning will result in a water level for the pond at 84m, with a remaining water volume of approximately 900,000 imperial gallons (approximately 4,100,000 litres). The minimum volume of water for the National Fire Protection Association and the Fire Underwriters Survey to recognize a water body as a firefighting source is 24,000 imperial gallons. Therefore, the remaining water volume will be approximately 37 times larger than the minimum.

Environmental concerns: An Environmental Impact Assessment report, prepared by the project's Qualified Environmental Professional, meets the requirements for environmental protection. In addition, the Contractor has submitted their own Environmental Management Plan, which has been reviewed by the project staff and the Province. Staff will be actively monitoring the construction work and a revegetation plan will be finalized for the newly exposed pond shoreline, once soil conditions can be verified.

The CRD has updated the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), including the list of stakeholders that were consulted throughout this project, to its website. A copy of these FAQs is attached.

It has taken many years to get to this point, and by moving forward with the decommissioning of the dam and naturalizing Gardom Pond, the benefits and protection for the community from reducing the flooding risk will now be seen.

Yours truly,

David Howe
Director, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area
Capital Regional District

SM/cam

cc: Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, CAO, Capital Regional District
Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks and Environmental Services

Attachment: List of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

