

Secretary/Treasurer's Report
Chimney Felker Lakes Landholders Association
Annual General Meeting, August 13, 2020
(postponed from May due to COVID-19 pandemic)

For the past year I have attended to collecting and distributing mail (through Canada Post and the society's g-mail account); receiving and depositing income (annual membership, golf fees, grants) and paying expenses, including the reimbursement of members for out of pocket expenses related to the fire department, golf course and community hall; providing agendas and taking minutes at meetings of the board; and renewing insurance and work safe BC policies.

The following is a brief summary of the year:

Golf Course

The golf course continues to be a reliable source of income to the association. In 2019, a grounds keeper was contracted from May to September to maintain the golf course. A misunderstanding related to pay schedule, unfortunately led to his leaving shortly before his contract was complete. Despite this, the year turned out well. This year the golf course grounds keeper is our very own, Bill Margetts, and he is doing a wonderful job. Thank you!

Community Events

This past year the hall hosted the annual Halloween party and a Christmas Craft Fair, both of which were well attended and enjoyed by the community. Much more to come when COVID concerns calm...stay tuned

Website

Information has been collected for a community website, which will be launched by the end of the year. If you have a service or skill to share with the community, please remember to let us know so we can post it on the page for you.

Water Levels and Damn Control

The damn on the west end of Chimney lake is controlled by a rancher who removes boards in the spring, for irrigation purposes. Regulations state the damn is slowly opened starting April 1st each year. It is wide open by July 1st and must be closed by the 17th until the following year. In the fall of 2019, it was noted the lakes were at a higher than average level and concerns were raised over the impact to shorelines when the ice came off in the spring. The association was told a private request was made to the rancher to reopen the damn so water levels would decrease. This was done illegally. Beyond this, someone in the community put boards back when this was observed, and it seemed to be a tit for tat game for a while. It should be noted it is illegal to tamper with a damn. We have no idea of downstream impacts and what the following years have in store. While we hope in the future to negotiate a say in damn control and water levels, there are many considerations to take. This will be the topic of a special meeting in the fall related to lake and environmental health.

Algae in the Lake (over)

This past July (2020) a report of the potential presence of blue-green algae on Chimney Lake, was made to the Chimney-Felker Lakes community association. Occurring in a relatively small zone in shallow water on the south side of the lake, pictures were shared and samples were taken by the person who reported it, and submitted for testing. While the lake is well known to have 'regular' harmless algae blooms, this bloom had the appearance of cyanobacteria, a blue-green algae which produces toxins- known to be especially dangerous to small children and pets. Toxins produced by these algae are not removed by boiling water. With packed campgrounds and many pets drinking from the lakes, along with the worry some residents may still getting their household water from the lake, a heads up was sent out by email and Facebook to inform people of the potential presence, so they would be aware and know if they saw it, to avoid contact.

This was not the only report of 'strange algae' in 2020. A gasoline-like slick was noted on both Chimney and Felker lakes a couple of times this year, as well as thick mats of brown, green organic substance around the first campground on Chimney, near the dam, and at the outflow of Felker. Test results showed the algae were not the toxin-producing "bad-guys," which are rare and only known to occur under fairly specific conditions.

Harmless algae blooms have been observed and documented on the lakes in the past. Large brown-green mats were sampled in 2014/15 and associated with increased phosphorus levels in the water. Many factors contribute to algae blooms. Most notably nutrient availability, water temperature, sunlight and flow. Warm, still, shallow water with long daylight hours and an abundance of "nutrients" can create the perfect storm where toxic blooms can occur.

The two main factors associated with increased algal growth in water bodies are (1) climate change and (2) eutrophication (excessive nutrients in water from runoff).

With surface water temperatures shown to be increasing significantly in the region over the past few years, along with record rainfalls, creating flooding and septic system problems across the region, it is not surprising to have algal blooms occur.

While most algae (phytoplankton) are beneficial as both a food source and oxygen producer for life on the planet, large blooms which grow into thick mats can be dangerous to aquatic life and are notoriously known as agents of 'dead zones' in oceans and lakes across the globe. Beyond this, blooms occurring related to sewage contamination can have a whole host of bacterial and other components capable of impacting the lake in ways that are most certainly not beneficial to health.

We all have a role to play in preserving and protecting the waters of Chimney and Felker Lakes. Residents can do their part by being proactive about getting septic systems pumped and upgrading those which are not up to standard. Please, never pump flood or septic waters into the lake and be extremely discerning about fertilizer use. The health of the lake depends on us.

While "blue-green" algal blooms are uncommon, algal blooms have been occurring on the lakes for as long as people living here remember. Ranging from beneficial to problematic, lab results indicate it was not cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), which are the bad guys that produce toxins in the water. While less than 1% of blooms have the needed environmental conditions required to create toxins, they are an indication of imbalance in the ecosystem and can be a warning around the health of the lake. Higher than normal water levels are a big piece of the picture. Initiated by excess nutrients from grazing cattle, septic systems and fertilizer use, I

hope the appearance of this bloom will be seen as an opportunity to learn more about the health of our lakes and what we can all do to protect them for ourselves and future generations. Expect more on this from our Stewardship committee in the coming months.

Break-in

The hall was broken into through removal of the kitchen window on October 11, 2019. The incident was reported to the police. There was some structural damage to the fire departments equipment room, which has since been fixed. Nothing of value was found to be missing.

Hall

Plans are in the works for renovating and 'greening' up the hall. We are thankful for a grant from the Cariboo Regional District this past year which allowed for the purchase of a PA system (microphone and speakers) for use at events.

Gaming Grant

Issues with the gaming grant, which saw the association denied funding the past couple years have been addressed by Allan Schaad and efforts are being made to secure this community grant again in the future.

Volunteer Fire Department

The status of our volunteer fire department continues to be one of uncertain future. In June of 2020 we hosted a meeting between the CFLLA Board of Directors, Office of the Fire Commissioner, Cariboo Regional District and Insurance company representatives. The findings of this meeting will be discussed at a special meeting in the fall and minutes emailed out to members in the coming weeks.

Learning the duties of the position and function of the organization, has had a steep learning curve. I am very grateful to the on-going support and assistance of Sophia Schneider, Cindy Bornyk, Dwayne Rustemeyer, the current board of directors and other community members with past involvement in the association. Thank you.

Jacinta D'Andrea, Secretary-Treasurer 2019/20