

GONL Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Virtual Meeting

1. **Call to Order** – John 6.15 pm.
2. **Attendance** - Dawne, John, Doug, Dan, Julie, Peter, Lisa, Brent. Dave had technical trouble.
Approval of Agenda - AIF
Approval of July 16, 2026, Minutes - Dawne, John, AIF
Welcome Dave Jarvos, who will join the GONL Board to fill the vacant position.
2. **Financial Report** – Brent. The Financial statements to August 7, 2006, were presented. Larratt Aquatic Consulting have not yet been paid their interim fee. Dawne to ask Heather to submit an invoice (\$5000.00).
Motion: To invest \$5000.00 into a 30-day term deposit. John, Doug, AIF
Motion to accept the Financial Statements to August 7, 2026, John, Doug, AIF.
3. **Registration of Bylaw Resolutions with the Registrar of Societies** - The revised bylaws and resolutions passed at the AGM have been registered, and confirmation of registration was received. The new GONL directors have been registered with the Registrar of Societies.
4. **Water Scarcity Crisis in the Nicola Valley** - Water Scarcity has become the priority of the Watershed Governance Partnership. Dawne hopes to meet with the Planning Committee to understand how they plan to move forward.
5. **Communication with Ducks Unlimited.** Dan met with Bruce Harrison, Head of Conservation Science and Planning and Kasey McKenzie, Biologist of Ducks Unlimited. They outlined the history of the Ducks Unlimited Wetlands that were developed on the Guichon Ranch in 1989. Ducks Unlimited had a 30-year lease with the Guichon's and when this lease ran out it was not officially renewed but it continued to be operated with the mutual approval of Ducks Unlimited and the Guichons. The wetlands were made up of two basins with a combined size of over 100 hectares. There was an average of 3 feet of water across the basins. The water license states "669-acre feet of water". The water flow was controlled by two dams and steel and log weirs that Ducks Unlimited built. Ducks Unlimited paid approximately 1 million dollars for the installation of the dams and weirs and paid for on-going maintenance. The water license was paid for by Ducks Unlimited, but the license was under the landowner's land title. With the sale of the Guichon Property in 2021 the agreement continued for approximately 1.5 years, until Ducks Unlimited were told by the new owners that they wanted to use the land to expand

their cattle business and no longer would continue working with Ducks Unlimited. Ducks Unlimited considered this wetland the Crown Jewel of their BC projects. In 2023 the new owners removed the logs from the dams/weirs and the wetland was drained. Ducks Unlimited were extremely disappointed to lose the wetlands and still hope that they can work with the current owners to reestablish the wetland area. GONL will continue to investigate this issue, to determine if the release of water from the wetland could have resulted in the unprecedented poor water quality in Nicola Lake in 2024 and 2025.

6. **Dawne met with Nicholas Peterson** - the Chief of the Lower Nicola Band to discuss how GONL and the Lower Nicola Band can work together towards improving the water quality in the Nicola watershed.
7. **Testing Results** - Dawne has prepared a new Water Update from June and July test results which will be emailed to members this week. This update has been emailed to board members, and it has been approved to distribute. Larratt Aquatic Consulting has suggested we might like to add Dust Ball Canisters to our testing, to understand the impact of air pollution (e.g. ash) on the nutrients in the lake. Dawne will ask for a quote for this additional testing.
8. **Satellite Project** - Dawne reported that the Centre for Disease Control has applied for a Citizen Grant (\$37000.00) to move ahead with the next phase of the satellite project. GONL will be an important part of the project if the grant is received.
9. **Lake Water Level Update** - John reported that he attended a meeting of government officials who monitor and control the lake level. In early August the lake was historically at the lowest level for any previous August (90 cm below full capacity). The impact of the low water level on fish was discussed in depth. There was concern with the sediment level near to the dam, and the need to dredge the area was discussed. Pumping water from Nicola Lake to the Nicola River was also discussed as an alternative to dredging.
10. **Water License Update** - Water licensees have been asked to voluntarily reduce their water use.
11. **Contact with Paul Devick, Environmental Committee, BC Cattleman's Association** - A letter has been sent to Paul Devick requesting a meeting to discuss areas in which the Cattleman's Association and GONL might collaborate. In particular, we asked to: explore opportunities to reduce direct cattle access to Nicola Lake and other water bodies; encourage a review of existing feedlots to meet the TNRD setback guidelines; support management practices that reduce nutrients from entering water bodies; and pursue funding which could help ranchers offset the cost of fencing to keep cattle out of streams and water bodies. No response has been received yet.

12. Legal Enforcement and Education - We would like to pursue a clearer understanding of who has the responsibility of enforcement of environmental and agricultural mis practices, and we would like to pursue and clarify the legal test for prosecutions to ensure that our data collection matches the legal test. We are aware of properties where land title covenants have been clearly disregarded. There is “here-say” that fines have been imposed. We will investigate as to whether any enforcement has taken place.

13. Membership Update - Dawne reported that currently there are 267 members. The breakdown of members by community: Nicola Bay 82, Lakeshore 7, Quilchena 39, Beaver Point 31, Harmon 25, Other 7, Merritt 5, Nkwala Beach 3, Jack Ranch 3, Other 1.

14. Strategic Planning. We will continue to focus on testing until the results of the Nutrient Budget are presented by Larratt Aquatic Consulting (hopefully early in 2027). The nutrient budget will give us a clear understanding of the water quality in all parts of Nicola Lake. (These results will include our testing as well as testing done by other organizations). Once the results are received, we will develop a plan for our priorities in 2027.

We will continue with our sign campaign, and through the QR code providing up to date information to lake users. Signs will be replaced if necessary and additional locations will be considered.

Our monitoring of Merritt based Social Media Sites suggests that the people of Merritt feel that Nicola Lake offers little access for non-lake property owners and that the water in the lake continues to be contaminated and not suitable for recreation. We would like to explore ways in which we can strengthen the concept of Nicola Lake being an important community and tourist asset in the Nicola valley. We would also like to make sure that up-to-date water quality data is made easily available to Merritt residents.

We would like to set up a meeting with Tracey Thomas of the Watershed Governance Partnership to discuss how GONL can be involved in their work.

We will continue collaborating with WLRS, Upper Nicola Band, Lower Nicola Band, Ministry of Environment and Parks, Interior Health, Center of Disease Control, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

15. Meeting Adjourned 8.00pm - John, Dan, AIF