

Peachland View Article – February 5th, 2019 – Editor, Kristen Friesen

New Pier Has Peachlanders Walking and Wheeling Over Water

Have you walked on the new pier yet?

There's still some finishing touches before the official opening in May, says Eldon Kerbes, president of the Peachland Pier Society, but it's nice to see people out enjoying it.

“We're pleased it's at the stage it is now. The support we've gotten from businesses, service groups and particularly, individuals, is very satisfying. This is going to be a great asset for Peachland.”

It's also a credit to the power of volunteers — the pier project started as a seed of an idea almost ten years ago, and from there, three local groups saw it to fruition. The Peachland Lions Club, the Peachland Rotary and the Peachland Sportsmen's Club formed the non-profit Pier Society and are proud to say the entire project, in excess of \$500,000, was raised entirely through fundraising and grants.

“It did not involve local taxes, and upon completion, it will be turned over to the district,” says Kerbes, explaining the district waived the development permit and construction cost charges, and helped with grant applications and issuing tax receipts for donations.



From left, structural engineer Michael Weilmeier, Eldon Kerbes, president of the Peachland Pier Group, project manager John Abernethy, Peachland Lions Club president Gary Brooks, Peachland Rotary past president Peggy Southin, and Chris Boyle, Vice President of the Peachland Pier Group.

Describing it as a “Rolls-Royce of piers, but not on a Rolls-Royce budget,” Chris Boyle a director with the Peachland Rotary and the pier group's vice president, says the area in front of the 120-metre long pier will be paved for better wheelchair access, and benches, memorial plaques, signage and lighting

will be installed. The lighting will be a separate project between the Peachland Rotary and their Rotarian counterparts in West Kelowna.

“Right now, the pier is kind of like a car without headlights,” he says.

Right from the beginning, the goal was to make the pier accessible to all — those who use walkers and wheelchairs can use three of the specialized fishing bays, which will be handy for kids as well. There’s six other spots for fishing, and there’s plans to expand local learn-to-fish programs to Peachland. Kokanee, lake whitefish, burbot and rainbow trout are some of the species that can be caught.

Below the surface, Kerbes says steel piles were used instead of wood, yellow cedar was used for the glulam beams (which is a glued laminated product), and the posts, railings and pier deck are Douglas fir.

“It’s designed to last 100 years,” he says, crediting Shoreline Pile Driving and Boat Lifts, CWMM Consulting Engineers, and Structurlam, a mass timber company, for their work on the project.

Al Springer, of the Peachland Sportsmen’s Association agreed that teamwork was the key to the project’s success, saying it’s the best thing that’s happened to Peachland in a long time.

“This project was backed by a lot of people who got it built. And it’s everything we wanted it to be.”

As they gathered on the pier earlier this week, representatives from most of the groups involved were happy to join several other Peachlanders who were walking over the water.

“This is a gift to the people of Peachland and the surrounding community,” says Peachland Rotary past president Peggy Southin.

If you want your name, or the name of a loved one on a stainless steel plaque at the pier, donations for that are \$100 and up, and the cutoff is Feb.28. Visit www.peachlandpier.org, and look for the ‘donate’ button.