

Notes from the COCO Meeting of March 27, 2008

Mike Marriott of the Safety Minded ATV Club chaired the meeting. There were twenty people from a number of organizations as well as interested citizens in attendance.

* WRWEO member reported on the recent WRWEO AGM where a resolution was passed to seek legislated protection for the public lands bound by Highways 103&333.

There was much discussion about this move. Members of the ATV community were concerned that they would be banned from riding on the hard pack roads namely the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road, the Old Halifax Road and the DNR owned Fire Road.

The history of the creation of the Bluff Trail was given. An agreement about the Bluff Trail and the riding on the above hard pack roads entered into in 2001 by WRWEO, the Trust and the Safety Minded ATV Club was reviewed. The thinking among these groups is that you would exclude the hard packed roads from protection of the surrounding lands under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act and that the roads would be kept open and maintained under Trails Management Agreements between ATVAN's and the province.

*A private camp owner on public lands expressed a concern about how a Wilderness Protected Area designation would impact on the camp owners. At this juncture no one can answer that question. The suggestion was made that this was a matter between the camp owners and the authorities to sort out quite separate and apart from any move to seek protected area status for the public lands.

*St Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association outlined their concerns about the lands being developed at Hwys 213 and 3 for the Tantallon Village commercial area.

SMBSA is hosting a panel discussion on Friday night with panellists Bob Fournier, Leon Kentridge and Jen Graham. On Saturday March 30 from (9:30 to noon there will be a workshop to collect concerns of residents and to discuss ideas about how residents would like the area to look

- Many concerns were expressed about things like the number of new traffic lights, congested traffic patterns, light pollution, stressors on the Bay with potential for added siltation.

* The Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust rep gave a short presentation about the Trust's work with government as a member of a Working Group, the outcome of that work and growing pressures for land development, erosion of K Roads in other areas has led the Trust Board to place a resolution before the membership at the April 3 AGM to seek protection for the Public Lands bounded by Hwys. 3 & 333 under the Wilderness Protected Areas Act.

* A description of the History of the Terence Bay Wilderness Area was given. Regrettably there was little prior consultation held with the area residents before signs with new rules curtailing some freedoms were erected by the Department of Environment and Labour. This precedent is making many very uneasy if another Wilderness Area comes into place. Much discussion ensued about the current rules for activities in a WA including a description of the newly designated Ship Harbour Long Lake W.A

*The rep from the Resources Opportunity Centre at Terence Bay spoke at some length about the new Prospect Community Centre soon to be erected on HRM lands on the Prospect Road. This centre will provide a number of services for the area residents, will have meeting rooms and HRM transportation to the door. The building will be adjacent to the Western Commons lands owned by HRM

*The Western Commons Wilderness Advisory Committee will soon have a draft management plan available for public consultation.

*The rep from m BLT R2T reported on the difficulties being encountered by their members because of the very different ideas by the Province and the HRM staff. DNR holds legal authority over the rail beds in HRM but they provide no maintenance money, HRM has no legal authority but is strongly pushing to have most rail beds in HRM become active transportation corridors with no motorized traffic. HRM does provide maintenance money, which they have been late in paying in 2007 because of the refusal of BLT R2t to ban motorized traffic.

BLTR2T sponsors a Seniors' Walking Group. BLT R2T has a bench program whereby residents and others cannot donate \$\$ for a bench. Each durable bench costs \$1000

Discussion ensued about how pressure could be taken off the BLT R2T if the hard packed roads in the Five Bridge Lakes Crown Land Block could be part of a province wide trail system. The AGM has been postponed until some better resolution of matters with HRM and the province.

*A number of other uses of Public Lands were given. There have been scientific studies that have gone on and are presently underway, such as the Flora study undertaken in 2005, the recently completed Lichens Survey, activities by the Geocache Society, Birders, walkers. FBWHT hopes to have a new publication available in the Fall 2008. It is a Walking Guide to the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road and details the history and other information about the road that extends from Glen Margaret through to Good wood and on through Long Lake Provincial Park into Spryfield

*A member of Canoe Kayak NS spoke about the number of canoe routes in the Public Lands block. More information about these routes can be found in three maps located on their website www.ckns.ca

There are also several wonderful accounts of canoe trips taken by members of CKNS in previous editions of The Bridge found on the Trust website www.fivebridgestrust.ca

* St .Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails has placed several picnic benches along their trails. These are much appreciated by the trail users as a place to rest or have a picnic.

* The next COCO Meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2008 at the Tantallon Library and will be hosted by the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association.