

CHEBUCTO PENINSULA

A Framework for Collaborative Environmental Stewardship

On Saturday, June 25, 2005, the Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust held a workshop involving municipal, provincial, and federal government representatives and representatives from a variety of community groups throughout the Chebucto Peninsula to discuss a proposal to establish a Framework for Collaborative Environmental Stewardship.

The objective of the proposed framework is to coordinate planning and management activities related to the ecological health and public use of public land on the Chebucto Peninsula.

DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION

Membership

The proposal calls for collaboration among federal, provincial, and municipal governments and registered community groups that is committed to the environmental health and the public use of public land for recreation, education, and research.

Territory

The Chebucto Peninsula will be defined as that body of land bounded by the Hammonds Plains Road and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean from Bedford Basin to the Head of St. Margaret's Bay.

Tenets

The Collaborative Framework shall be formed in recognition of the following tenets:

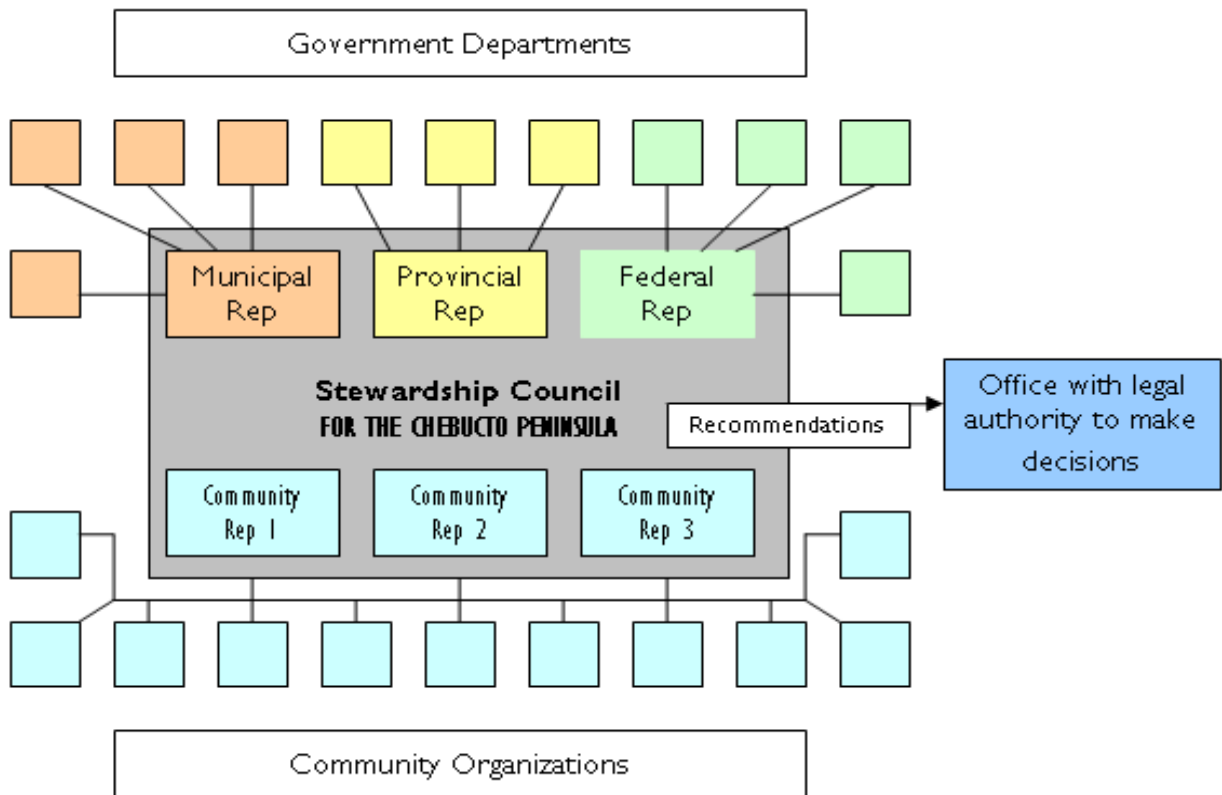
- (1) That government (federal, provincial, or municipal) is the legal steward or trustee of public land,
- (2) That government has a fiduciary responsibility to manage public land in the public interest,
- (3) That the public interest is best served by preserving the lands bounded by Highways 103 and 333 in their natural state as an area uniquely accessible and beneficial to an urban population for appropriate recreational, educational, and scientific use.
- (4) That government can best exercise its fiduciary responsibilities to protect and preserve these lands in their natural state through written agreements with community organizations and traditional users of the land who are willing and able to accept specific roles and responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Participating constituencies accept the following roles and responsibilities:

- (1) to meet regularly to share relevant information relating to public, private, governmental, and community organization activities that affect the environmental health of public lands within the designated area,

- (2) to advise government as the legal trustees of the land on appropriate uses of the land that are consistent with preserving these lands in a healthy, natural state, and
- (3) to encourage community organizations, individuals, and experienced users of the land to accept active roles and responsibilities under written agreements with the appropriate level of government.



Operational Structure

The Framework for Collaborative Stewardship will have a Stewardship Council that will conduct and coordinate planning and management activities related to the ecological health and public use of public land on the Chebucto Peninsula. The Framework and its Stewardship Council will operate along the following lines.

Council Membership

- Three government representatives (one representing each level of government)
- Three community representatives (elected by member groups)

Community Membership

Any registered community group that is committed to the environmental health and the public use of public land for recreation, education, and research may buy in or opt out at any time

Activities

- Protect public land for public use
- Monitor the health of the land
- Set guidelines for appropriate use of the land
- Facilitate community-based projects to care for the land

Decision Making

- Government representatives on the Council will represent and be accountable to the departments which their level of government represents.
- Community representatives on the Council will represent and be accountable to the community organizations that elected them.
- Decision-making among the community members and instructions to community Council representatives will be by consensus

Ways and Means

- If operating costs are required, each community group will contribute an amount appropriate to the size of the group (i.e., membership fees would follow a schedule depending on size of membership)
- The three government offices will match community membership fees in equal shares
- Projects that require a budget will be undertaken on a project-by-project basis

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

Workshop for Collaborative Environmental Stewardship

The following individuals participated in the workshop to discuss a Framework for Collaborative Environmental Stewardship of public land on the Chebucto Peninsula [i.e. that body of land bounded by the Hammonds Plains Road and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean from Bedford Basin to the Head of St. Margaret's Bay].

John Charles	HRM	Catherine Klefenz	BLTR2T/ HRTAT
John Brazner	Herring Cove	Oliver Maass	NSEL
Bill Matheson	WRWEO	Bob Shibling	WRWEO
Mike Marriott	SMATVC	Anna Metaxas	WRWEO
Bob Pett	NSTPW	Debbie Wallace	Environment Canada
Jamie Steeves	Trout Nova Scotia	Peter Bigelow	HRM
Chris Miller	BCLWS	Raymond Plourde	EAC
Frank Hope	WRWEO	Don Arnold	FBWHT
Kevin Garroway	CBEMN	Shelly Webb	SMBRTDA
Gary Armsworthy	FBWHT	Joanne Cox	EAC
Barb Allen	ROC- Terrence Bay	Beth McGee	FBWHT
Hugh Gillis	NSDNR	Tom Musial	FBWHT
Eleanor Lindsay	FBWHT	Wayne Rogers	FBWHT

The morning session included an overview of the Framework along with a suggested model for collaboration. Following the two brief presentations, representatives of the three levels of government were asked to provide comments regarding the proposed Framework. Community groups were also given an opportunity to make comments.

Prior to the lunch break the group was divided into three with each being asked to consider a chosen topic. The discussions were to begin over lunch and continue after the lunch break. The following is a summary of the discussion for each of the three topics. Regrettably not all of the participants could stay for the entire period due to previous commitments. We have included a list of who participated in each group along with their report.

Focus Group 1

Participants

Tom Musial	Eleanor Lindsay
Raymond Plourde	Don Arnold
Peter Bigelow	Chris Miller

Guiding Principles

- (1) Government (federal, provincial, or municipal) is the legal steward or trustee of public land and is responsible for managing public land in the public interest.
- (2) The public interest is best served by setting aside significant, natural, protected areas (including terrestrial and coastal areas) for conservation and appropriate recreational, educational, and scientific use for present and future generations.
- (3) Government can best protect and preserve public lands in their natural state through collaborative planning and management involving municipal, provincial, and federal departments, community organizations, and traditional users of the land.
- (4) Collaborative planning and management should be guided by a constructive and creative approach to land use following principles that will sustain a healthy, natural environment.
- (5) The principles recommended by HRM planners to sustain a healthy, natural environment on municipal lands should be extended to all provincial and federal Crown lands on the Chebucto Peninsula.

Additional Notes *

Group 1 recognized the occasional need for limited resource extraction to support local projects, but emphasized that this recognition did not constitute support either for the construction of Highway 113 or using aggregate from Blue Mountain for such construction.

Focus Group 2

Participants

Frank Hope
Bill Matheson
Oliver Maass

Catherine Klefenz
Debbie Wallace
Wayne Rogers

Territory, Membership, Roles, and Responsibilities

Preamble

The group first discussed the terminology that should be used to describe the entire organization. The following points were considered:

- if the name of the organization should describe a group of people, an arrangement of organizations, or a planning and management process. If any of these, "Framework" may not be a suitable descriptor.
- if the title should include the word "environment" to indicate a focus of activity
- if the name should reflect an interactive process between community-based, environmentally concerned organizations and government agencies
- if any of the following terms would be desirable descriptions
 - Coalition
 - Collaborative
 - Committee
 - Council
 - Task Force

Group 2 made no final recommendations, but one popular suggestion labeled the entire organization "The Chebucto Peninsula Environmental Council" and referred to lead group in the top box of diagram as "the Council Executive."

Territory

The group suggests

- using the term "mandate" rather than "territory" since mandate encompasses more than geographic boundaries
- that the focus should be on environmental issues related to the public lands on the Chebucto Peninsula, at least in the initial stages
- that activities address a realistic and attainable objective / goal rather than an ideal.

Notwithstanding the recent focus of the HRM Draft Regional Plan on Watersheds rather than geographic or political boundaries, Group 2 suggested that the newly proposed Environmental Council exclude the following focuses, at least in the initial stages

- Bedford Basin
- Halifax Harbour
- Downtown urban core
- Inshore and coastal water issues, such as fishing and aquaculture

These exclusions were made not in recognition importance but in recognition of limited volunteer support and expertise.

Issues related to the Western portion of St. Margaret's Bay, such as those at Ingramport, were deferred to the consideration of the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association and its willingness to join the Environmental Council.

Group 2 reached consensus on the following points:

Territory

The paragraph heading should read "Mandate" instead of "Territory."

Members of the Environmental Council

- (1) The following key federal agencies should be added to the membership
 - a. CFIA (Food and Agriculture)
 - b. Rural Development Secretariat (Contact Person, Cossey)
- (2) The following key provincial agencies should be added to the membership
 - a. Transportation and Public Works
 - b. Sport and Recreation
- (3) The following key HRM agencies should be added to the membership
 - a. Real Property
 - b. Water Advisory Board
- (4) Appropriate aboriginal groups should be added to the membership
- (5) Criteria for Community Group representation should include the groups environmental concerns, thereby becoming Community-Based Environmental Organizations (CBEOs)
- (6) Criteria for Community Group representation should include ad hoc groups that are not necessarily registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies

Members of the Stewardship Council Executive

- (1) Amend first point to read "senior representatives of each level of government (preferably at the Deputy Minister level or equivalent)."
- (2) Change second point to read " Three representatives of member community groups elected by the community groups to advise appropriate government agencies on appropriate uses of public land."

- (3) Add a third point that mandates the Council Executive to promote partnering arrangements between CBEOs and government departments with respect to specific projects.

Group 2 concluded standing representation from industry or the private sector was impractical on the Executive Council because of difficulty of identifying a spokesperson to represent a very diverse range of interests. Alternatively, such representation should be at the project level on a case-by-case basis.

Additional Notes *

There may be some confusion about how the Stewardship Council will operate. While it remains for the participants to develop its operational parameters under which the Council will operate, the following comments may provide some clarification and perhaps provide impetus for designing an operating model that meets everyone's expectations.

The Stewardship Council in reality the Framework's Executive, which consists of equal numbers of representatives of government and representatives of community-based environmental organizations (CBEOs). These representatives would be senior persons from their respective organizations, capable of making decisions or with sufficient influence that their recommendations would be taken seriously by the constituencies they represent.

The CBEOs would develop their positions/issues at meetings of the CBEO'S, say every six weeks. At these same meetings, the representatives who sit on the Executive would brief the CBEOs on the positions and priorities of government. Through consensus, the CBEO'S would provide direction to their representatives. In this way, the information flows from the executive to the CBEOs and the CBEOs have the opportunity to provide guidance and direction to the executive. In theory, the same process would take place on the government side of the Framework, although the CBEOs would not presume to tell government departments how they should proceed.

The Council Executive would meet every three months to deal with agenda issues. The agenda will include items proposed both by the CBEO and the government representatives. The agenda may contain both standing items and ad hoc. An example of a standing item could be "Inventory of Public Land on the Chebucto Peninsula." Under this item the Executive would identify a piece of public land each meeting to determine when and why it was acquired, and by whom. The executive might then discuss any potential use for this land. The discussion might then lead to an ad hoc item: a project to gather information relevant to determining the appropriate use that that piece of land.

The Executive Council might also act as an advisory body to government. For example, the provincial government might indicate that it plans to close and dispose of the property of one of its provincial parks. Following discussion, the Executive Council might conclude that the proposed action will have unforeseen consequences or that an alternative action is desirable. In this situation, the appropriate government representative on the Council would advise his or her minister accordingly.

The Chebucto Peninsula Stewardship Council would also provide an opportunity to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Chebucto Peninsula. It would be an ideal forum for government to hear the collective concerns of those CBEOs that participate in Stewardship Council.

Focus Group 3

Participants

John Brazner
Bob Pett
Beth McGee
Hugh Gillis

Mike Marriott
Catherine Klefenz
Kevin Garroway
Joanne Cook

Objectives

(1) Protect public land for public use

Discussion centred on the need to determine the levels of protection required for different types of Public land in keeping with ecologically unique or sensitive areas. Group 3 reached consensus that

- residential and commercial development would have to be restricted
- location-specific uses would have to be defined
- many areas of natural environment would have to be restored
- consultation with private landowners of adjacent lands was required
- education of private landowners of adjacent lands was desirable

(2) Monitor the environmental health of the land

To monitor the environmental health of the land the Environmental Council must

- develop ecosystem indicators to determine its health
- identify both terrestrial and aquatic (inland/coastal) indicators
- monitor point sources non-point sources of pollution, especially
 - a. old dump sites
 - b. industrial sites
- monitor changes in land uses over time using GIS inventories as a tool

(3) Set guidelines for appropriate public use of land

Discussion focused on the following appropriate use of public land for

- education
- sustainable forestry
- recreational fishing
- recreational vehicle (motorized as well as non-motorized) use on designated trails
- scientific research
- walking , hiking, and cycling trails
- canoe routes with well-marked portages for canoeists and kayakers
- camping in designated spots or areas
- promotion of "Leave No Trace" discipline

(4) Monitor the public use of public land on the Chebucto Peninsula

Group 3 reached consensus that monitoring activities should include

- land use over time
- enforcement of established regulations
- measures of sustainability
- reports of trends
- bio-physical impact of activities on the environment (actual and potential)
- socio-economic impact of activities on the environment (actual and potential)

(5) Review and facilitate community-based projects relating to the above objectives

After some discussion and working through the process Group 3 agreed that the bullet should be amended to read, "Review, facilitate, and develop community- based projects relating to the above objectives."

Group 3 envisioned community groups developing project proposals that would then be coordinated and vetted by the Executive Council. This review procedure would have the advantages of avoiding duplication and promoting partnerships.

(6) Develop ways and means of implementing projects recommended by the Stewardship Council

Group 3 saw the need for

- maintaining a perpetual inventory of short- and long-range projects
- establishing and maintaining a repository of relevant data with assistance from government, universities, and community groups
- developing ways and means of implementing projects
- identifying sources of funding and assisting with written proposals for funding

(7) Encourage Complimentary Stewardship by Private Land Owners

Group 3 quickly discovered that community-based stewardship required significant participation from private land owners whose property was adjacent to or in proximity to public land. Accordingly, Group 3 recommends

- a strategy for promoting this participation and
- an educational component to help private land owners understand the ways private land owners follow ecologically sound practices on their land.

Many Thanks

The organizing committee extends sincere thanks to each of the participants for their hard work and great ideas.

Feedback

The committee has attempted to record accurately the views and suggestions of each group, but in proceedings such as a workshop, we need to verify the record. Accordingly, we ask for your corrections to the above transcript as well as your comments about the next steps of the project. Please send your comments to Tom Musial (tom.musial@ili.ca) no later than July 8, 2005 .

Follow-up Meeting**

One workshop participant called for a meeting of the community groups (the group of groups) as soon as possible after the notes are circulated. The organizing committee believes this is a good idea and will undertake to make arrangements for this meeting, possibly during the week of July 11, 2005.

Conclusion

It is clear there is much support for the concept of a community-based Environmental Council working on behalf of the public lands of the Chebucto Peninsula. With the continuing support of the community groups and government departments that have endorsed the project, the concept is sure to become an operational reality.

*The additional notes were contributed by participants as feedback to the first set of circulated notes.

**A follow-up meeting was held on July 7 attended by representatives of six of the community groups who discussed the various comments made by the government representatives who participated in the workshop with reference to Minister Hurlburt's words in a letter to Tom Musial dated May 11, 2005: "We support establishing regular meetings that include representatives of government, public, private, and community organizations whose activities affect the public land use in the Chebucto Peninsula."

There was consensus that the Framework steering committee must now solicit from all participating departments a written statement of each department's commitment to the concept of the Framework and its willingness to implement a process along the lines proposed by workshop participants.