

May 30, 2010



Peter Labor
Acting Manager
Protected Areas Branch
Nova Scotia Environment
Halifax, NS

2 Wooden's River Road
Seabright, NS B3Z 3E2

Dear Mr. Labor:

It is with great delight that we respond to the call for submissions from Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) concerning the Five Bridge Lakes Candidate Wilderness Area slated for protection under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. We are pleased that so much of the Crown Land in the Five Bridge Lakes area of the Chebucto Peninsula is already placed in the Candidate Wilderness Area. However there are additional pieces the Trust would like to see included.

The Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust (the Trust) was formed in 2001 to conserve public land in its natural state for public use. The Crown Land block known as the Five Bridge Lakes area has been our focus for protection since our inception. Our work with government and communities has taken us on a variety of paths. In the Spring of 2008 we joined forces with a number of other community groups to form the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition (CWC). As a founding member organization of the CWC and participants in the work of the Steering Committee of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition several of our members have had much input into the compiling of materials for the submission presented to NSE from the Steering Committee of the CWC.

Crown land that could be reconsidered for inclusion in the FBLCW Area and boundaries will be the focus of the submission from the Trust.

Rather than restate each of the points made in the submission of the CWC we have chosen to highlight a number of key issues.

1. The Northwest quadrant is an area the Trust strongly supports for inclusion in the FBLCWA. We have been involved in a wide variety of community planning initiatives and solidly support the 6 major reasons for inclusion:

a) *Protection of the moose habitat and enhancement of connectivity.*

The Trust has actively supported any work related to gaining knowledge about the Mainland Moose including hosting public information sessions about the Mainland Moose and particularly the Chebucto Moose and the reporting of Moose sightings to the Department of Natural Resources. We would be most pleased to support management strategies that would preserve and strengthen the Chebucto Moose herd,

* *b) Habitat features,*

* *c) Watershed protection* (impacts on health of the East River and Wooden's River systems)

**d) Community Planning*

**e) Community Management and Stewardship*

f) Road and Trail Management –Early in our work the Trust entered into an agreement with Wooden's River Watershed Environmental Organization and the Safety Minded ATV Club to help the ATV community find a connector trail to the Crown Land block from the former rail bed now Rails to Trails in the Tantallon /Hubley areas. We were joined later in our work by the St. Margarets Bay Stewardship Association. Through our collaboration we have had many opportunities to work together and to address difficult issues both in the area of community planning and stewardship and road and trail management. The northern boundary of the area the Trust and others call the Northwest Quadrant was the area chosen for many reasons for the connector trail.

2. The area South of Hubley on the east side of Flake Brook should be included. During the time of public consultation we received a report from Stantec completed following their 2009 field work on the health of the Wooden's River system. In their report Flake Brook is noted at being a good spawning area for trout. The area to the north east of the outlet of Flake Brook into Hubley Big Lake contains a sizeable wetland area before rising to higher ground to the east. It is important to protect the wetland and a significant amount of higher ground for a buffer to the riparian zone should be included in the FBLCWA. Flake Brook is also important to the canoeists travelling north to Hwy 3 to Lewis Lake and into Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park.

6. Boundary abutting the HRM Western Common Wilderness Common. In addition to the concern outlined by the CWC regarding the boundary abutting the HRM Western Common and planning co-ordination for the area abutting the Nine Mile River we also ask for consideration to be given by both HRM and NSE to addressing issues of ongoing access to the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road (Coach Road) via the Greenhead Road.

7. Connectivity with the Terrance Bay Wilderness Area. The Trust encourages NSE and HRM to examine ways to establish a viable ATV route to enable those travelling from the south and east side of HRM lands and those in the FBLCWA lands to get to the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road .It has always been important to ensure that each community has access to public lands .

8. Blind Bay Park Reserve- Our members have asked that these lands and those where there is unclear ownership also be included to ensure their protection and for access to coastal waters for recreation such as canoeing and kayaking.

9. Big Lake .The Trust encourages NSE to protect the scenic west side of Big Lake, to provide possible linkage to the Peggy's Cove preservation Area and to enhance connectivity of the Peggy's Cove Preservation Area to the FBLCWA

Since the coastal regions both fresh and saltwater are under considerable pressure it is imperative for future generations that the islands located in the lakes already included in the FBLCWA be protected. Therefore we strongly recommend NSE review its decision regarding inclusion of islands in the Wilderness Area.

The Trust supports the concept of the Old St.Margaret's Bay Road and the Joshua Slocum trail being part of the FBLWA and under management and upgrading by way of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Safety Minded ATV Club and NSE .We also request that a similar arrangement be made to cover any part of the Old Halifax Road required for ATV passage to the Joshua Slocum Trail should the Northwest quadrant be included in the FBLCWA.

We wish to see the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road remain under provincial jurisdiction as a K road from Glen Margaret to Goodwood to ensure its ongoing use. Further we request its preservation for historical reasons. The history associated with this early transportation corridor enhances its value as part of the Wilderness Area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the planning to date for the creation of this exciting new Wilderness Area. We look forward to working with you as the planning for the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area goes forward.

Sincerely,

Beth McGee and John Cascadden
Co-Chairs
Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust

* See the corresponding numbers in the submission of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition

Addendum to the Submission of the Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust

In our submission sent to you earlier today we needed to have advised that the Trust is in agreement with the access points identified in the submission of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition(CWC). We have added additional comments about some of these access points. These correspond numerically with what has been submitted in the report from the CWC.

Several additional remarks should have been included in our submission. These include the need for well identified parking places with good signage. One such area has been identified, the western end of the Old St.Margaret's Bay Road at the Glen Margaret exit on Westhaver Road. Given the expressed parking concerns by the neighbours the staff at the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure have been alerted and a request has already been made for a sign to properly mark the Old St.Margaret's Bay Road and to identify location of suitable parking in the area. Other such signage and identification of suitable parking places will be required.

Also the location of picnic areas and campsites will need to be identified and requisite signage will be required.

Beth McGee and John Cascadden, Co-Chairs
Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust

May 31,2010