



# The Bridge

*Chair*  
Beth McGee  
jemcgee@eastlink.ca



January 2008

## Message from the Chair

*Trust memberships make a great gift for those interested in conserving public land in its natural state for public use. Membership for that special person can be obtained by contacting Cilla Dawson 902-404-0690*

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As 2007 closes, we have much to be thankful about in the environmental community in Nova Scotia.

In late fall, we were delighted to learn that Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Area was declared a candidate for protection under the Wilderness Protected Areas Act. Ship Harbour Long Lake was also designated as candidate for Wilderness Protection. Thanks to Neenah Paper for their corporate citizenship and willingness to work with government and community groups to make possible the announcement of protection for Ship Harbour Long Lake. Because of the commitment to discussion, negotiation and mutual compromise in this unique collaboration we now have a better way of conducting business in the securing of future protected areas. The Blandford Game Sanctuary and other areas received increased protections. Thanks to the scores of volunteers for their tireless work. Congratulations to Premier Rodney McDonald, Ministers David Morse and Mark Parent, and their staff for their courage and vision. We look forward to helping the province achieve its goal of securing 12% of Nova Scotia's land area as protected areas by 2015.

On the Chebucto Peninsula, a number of initiatives concerning the use of public lands got underway. The Western Commons Wilderness Advisory Committee began having regular meetings. HRM and DNR launched a Connectivity Project and Open Space Planning Project. HRM announced Public Consultations to gain public input about the siting of wind turbines in HRM. Discussions about a network of ATV trails for the province are ongoing. The Management Plan for Long Lake Provincial Park will be unveiled in 2008.

In the September issue of *The Bridge* I reported on the work of the Chebucto Peninsula Working Group. Members of the Group have received a letter, dated November 2, 2007 from Deputy Minister Peter Underwood to thank us for our time and talents. Although work on the Charter is far from finished, the Working Group has brought collaborative environmental planning to a significant first plateau. Members are invited to share in the Forest Strategy Voluntary Planning process slated to begin in 2008. The Trust has written a response to Mr. Underwood's letter and has posed a series of questions to DNR. Mr. Underwood's response will shape in part the direction of our work in 2008. We remain committed to the establishment of structure and a process for deliberations about use of public lands on the Chebucto Peninsula and look forward to further discussions with government and community groups on this matter.

As we make our resolutions for the New Year, I would like to thank all of the dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure the conservation of Public Lands in their natural state for Public Use.

Beth McGee

## **HRM and DNR to Test Principles for Collaborative Environmental Planning without Formal Ratification, Structure, or Procedures**

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### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

will be held at 7 pm on  
 Thursday, April 3, 2008  
 Tantallon Library

### **Web Address**

[www.fivebridgestrust.ca](http://www.fivebridgestrust.ca)

In September 2005, DNR Deputy Minister Peter Underwood formed a Working Group to develop a model for collaborative planning and management of public lands on the Chebucto Peninsula. The initiative responded to four years of the Trust's work culminating in its June 25, 2005 Workshop to establish a framework in which three levels of government and community representatives all might participate. The project was to serve as a model for other planning regions.

With guidance from a professional facilitator, the Working Group consisting of representatives from NSDNR, NSEL, HRM, and six Chebucto Peninsula community groups met over 14 months to develop the proposed model. Eight sets of recorded minutes clearly document the group's development of a Charter for a Stewardship Council that included (1) a mission and scope of activity, (2) guiding principles, (3) a statement of rights and responsibilities, (4) the role of a facilitator, (5) rules of operation, (6) rules of conduct, (7) ways of sourcing information and expertise, (8) guidelines for providing public information, (9) guidelines for observing confidentiality, (10) procedures for expanding group membership, (11) the need for an inventory of resources, and (12) a list of issues for the Council to address.

In March 2007, the Working Group achieved consensus on the guiding principles section of the Charter without consensus on the operational guidelines. DNR representatives proposed to test the guiding principles of the Charter on a specific project in which HRM and DNR would review the challenges and opportunities for maintaining the ecological, cultural, and recreational integrity of the Chebucto Peninsula's wilderness areas. The Working Group consented to the test the principles in the joint DNR/HRM project. The Trust proposed formal ratification of the Charter principles by community and government representatives and continued work on the operational guidelines, but DNR called no more meetings. The concept of the proposed Council disappeared. A senior DNR official wrote to the community members of the Working Group indicating that "at this time-and into the future there is no intention to proceed with the establishment of a Council."

DNR's surprise decision to abandon the concept of a Stewardship Council was never discussed by the Working Group and as such contradicted the fundamental tenet of the Charter's principles—decision by consensus. While the Working Group endorsed the principles, no government department or community group has formally endorsed the principles of the Charter.

Of even greater significance, the formal structure and operational procedures for planning and managing the sustainable use of public lands have been discarded.

The Trust is left with the following concerns:

- There is no formal indication that any level of government or any community organization has endorsed the Charter's principles. No document has been ratified or signed by the stakeholders. The Charter's principles can be changed or discarded at any time.
- Further work on the Charter has been discontinued, ostensibly to test the Charter's principles, yet there is no formal structure or operational procedures for applying the Charter's principles. The principles do not indicate who will participate in planning activities or provide procedures as to how they will participate. Making up the rules as a test experiment is not an acceptable procedure.
- The Charter's general principles do not constitute a working model that can be applied in or adapted to other areas of the province. The Working Group did not complete the task that it was originally asked to do.

See HRM and DNR on page 3...

### A Hike Down the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road

On September 17, Geoff Regan, MP Halifax West, and his Executive Assistant Bronwyn Burke accompanied several Trust members on a hike that began in Goodwood.

The party walked the 16 mile (22 km) trek across the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road, stopping to visit the Carmichael Cemetery, exploring the area around the Nine Mile River, noting the old farm areas, and observing magnificent wetlands as they walked past the Bennett Farm to the Big Five Bridge Lake area and on through the Oak Hill area to Glen Margaret.

The hike took six and a half hours and left everyone exhilarated from the exertion and captivated by the beauty of the varied habitats they passed. Following the hike, the group spoke to a number of local residents who know the land and some of its history. The enthusiasm and interest the Trust found among other community groups has motivated the Board to create a brochure about this wonderful old road.

Protection of public land in its natural state has the best opportunity for success when the land is widely used by the public. In order to make the Old Coach Road a venue that hikers, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, orienteering groups, geocaching groups, and ATV riders will use, the Trust is planning a brochure that provides a guided tour of the Old Coach Road from Harrietsfield to Seabright.

The guide would give distances, a history of the old road, a description of those who lived there and anecdotes that would make the area more attractive for recreational use. The brochure could highlight the old cemeteries in the area and provide opportunities for establishing geocaching sites.

Since a portion of the Old Coach Road begins in the Spryfield/Harrietsfield area and crosses through Long Lake Provincial Park, the Trust will explore the possibility of collaborating with colleagues from Mainland South and the Long Lake Park Association.

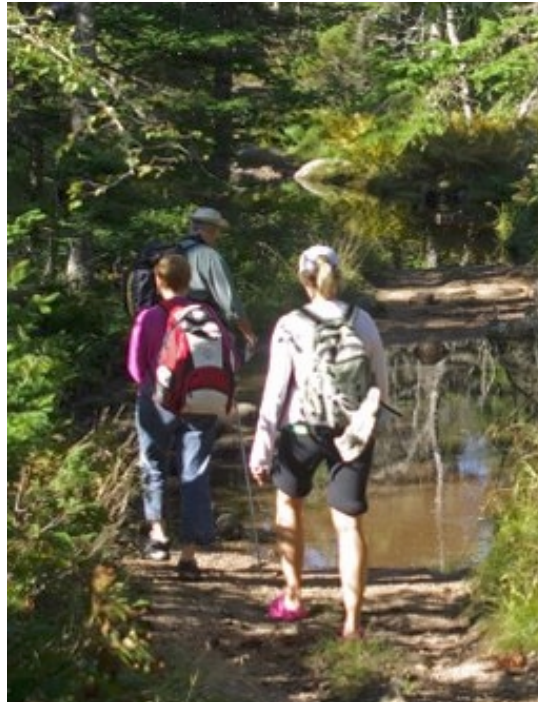


Photo: Geoff Regan

The Trust would be most interested in hearing your stories. To share your information or to learn more details please contact Beth McGee at 823-2245.

**HRM and DNR** continued from page 2...

The Trust offered to develop a working model for planning and managing public lands, even while DNR, HRM and certain community representatives tested the Charter's principles through the proposed "connectivity project," but DNR has indicated no interest in seeing this work continue.

In the weeks ahead, the Trust will consult with the community organizations of the Chebucto Peninsula to see if they share the Trust's concerns about ratification, structure, and operational procedures. If they do, the community groups should work together to develop the structure and operations that the community groups would like to see used for managing public lands and waters, conserving and improving their ecological integrity, and ensuring their sustainable use.

*Dedicated to conserving public land in its natural state for public use since 2001.*

#### Wetland Hot Line

If you become aware of an action that has or is likely to have a negative impact on a wetland or watercourse, call the Bedford Office of NSDEL, **424-7773**, during regular business hours.

**Emergency** after hour situations can be reported to **1-800-565-1633**. The Coast Guard will dispatch the on call inspector.

#### COCO

The **Council of Community Organizations** is an important forum to share community intelligence. Meetings begin at **7 PM** and are scheduled for:

**January 24th**  
**Tantallon Library**

**March 27th**  
**Safety Minded ATV Club**

**Everyone Welcome!**

#### Western Region Community Council Meetings

**January 28th**  
**February 25th**  
**March 24th**

**Please call 490-4000 for time and location of the meeting.**

**Lichen Brochure Launch**



The Trust is pleased to announce the completion of our *Lichens of the Bluff Wilderness Trail* brochure. Descriptions and beautiful photographs of many of the lichens found along the first loop of the trail are outlined. There are 4 designated habitat waystations displayed where a hiker can find and identify lichens.

A special Brochure Launch is planned for **Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at 7:00 pm** at the Tantallon Library. Lichenologist Frances Anderson will provide an interesting presentation and the GAIA singers, who funded the printing of the brochure, will be performing. In a week or

two following the Launch (weather dependant) Frances will lead a guided hike along the trail. For copies of the brochure please contact Catherine King at 823-3433.

**Editor**

**Wayne N. Rogers**  
wnrogers@eastlink.ca

The Trust wishes to thank **Jeff Parks** for the layout of this issue.

**Charitable Donations**

Charitable donations to support the work of the Trust may be made by contacting **Alan Shatford** at, **902- 823-2585**

An income tax receipt will be issued for your donation. Thank you for your support!

**Moose Watch**

Anyone having knowledge of moose sightings, spoor or antlers on the Chebucto Peninsula is encouraged to contact **Jenny Costello** of the Department of Natural Resources . **902- 861-2560**

**The Bridge**

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of **The Bridge**, please send an email to

**Cilla Dawson**  
petencil@eastlink.ca

and type "subscribe" in the subject line.

**Chebucto Peninsula Public Lands Connectivity Project**

As this issue of The Bridge is being prepared for distribution, a project known as the Chebucto Peninsula Public Lands Connectivity Project (CPPLCP) is being planned. The project will review the challenges and opportunities for maintaining the ecological, cultural, and recreational integrity of the Peninsula's wilderness areas. There will be four focal points for the study; (1) wildlife connectivity, (2) recreational corridors, (3) cultural corridors, and (4) riparian corridors. The project will undertake research in each of the focus areas, develop policy recommendations in each of these areas, and test the principles of the Charter developed by the Working Group (see other articles in this issue).

The project will begin with a Scoping Workshop to solicit public input regarding the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a plan to manage and set directions for public lands in the Chebucto Peninsula.

Scoping is an open process designed to determine significant issues and the range of actions and alternatives to be considered in preparing the request for proposals.

Representatives of HRM and DNR in the project will include parkland planners, heritage specialists, and wildlife biologists. HRM project managers will be available to answer questions about the project.

The public will be asked to consider and comment on potential project-related issues, opportunities and risks.

In addition to the Public Meetings, comments and other information relevant to the proposed study may be submitted by mail to by March 1, 2008 to

Chebucto Peninsula Public Lands Connectivity Project

Att: John Charles, Planner  
HRM Real Property Planning  
Infrastructure & Asset Management  
PO Box 1749  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 3A5

For more information about the CPPLCP, please visit: <http://www.halifax.ca/>

Approved by consensus, March 28, 2007

## **CHEBUCTO PENINSULA STEWARDSHIP CHARTER**

### **MISSION**

To collaborate in the management of public lands and waters on the Chebucto Peninsula in such a manner that conserves and improves ecological integrity and ensures sustainable use.

### **CHEBUCTO PENINSULA**

Public lands on the Chebucto Peninsula are an important natural asset for the residents of HRM and Nova Scotia. While there are multiple values and uses for these public lands, their proximity to the urban core provides much needed green space where residents can undertake healthy active living and enjoy numerous recreational opportunities. These public lands also support a rich diversity of natural ecosystems important to the environment, including numerous lakes and wetlands, headwater areas, pockets of old forest, and habitat for a number of rare species such as the endangered mainland moose.

As HRM continues to grow in the future, and an estimated 100,000 new residents are expected to move into the city over the next 25 years, the natural areas of the Chebucto Peninsula will become increasingly important for maintaining our quality-of-life and connection with the natural environment. They will also continue to provide suitable locations for a wide variety of outdoor education opportunities and scientific research.

There are approximately 25,000 hectares of public land on the Chebucto Peninsula, including Terrance Bay Wilderness Area, Duncans Cove Nature Reserve, Long Lake Provincial Park, Western Common Regional Park, Crystal Crescent Beach Provincial Park, Lewis Lake Provincial Park, Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Designated Regional Park and Crown lands, and Crown lands at Five Bridges Lake, Herring Cove Backlands, and Cox Lake.

### **GOVERNMENT – COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

The Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environment and Labour, and Halifax Regional Municipality will work collaboratively with community groups from HRM using an open and transparent process for managing public lands and waters on the Chebucto Peninsula, using consensus as the basis for decision-making.

Community and government representatives will work collaboratively to recommend policies, programs, projects, and activities for the sustainable management of public lands and waters on the Chebucto Peninsula. This successful collaboration will be dependent upon a number of guiding principles.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Consensus.** Participants will use consensus as the basis for decision-making.

**Inclusive.** Participants will create mechanisms through which all parties with an interest in an issue are able to participate.

**Open and Transparent.** Participants will ensure timely public communication of the process and outcomes.

**Collaboration.** Participants will collaborate with other stakeholders who are engaged in processes affecting public lands and waters on the Chebucto Peninsula.

**Commitment.** Participants will be committed to the mission established by the Charter and demonstrate this commitment through active participation.

**Respect.** Participants will respect diverse values, interests, knowledge, and accept different views as a strength of the consensus process.

**Informed Decision-Making.** Participants will base decisions on the best available information, including scientific information and local community knowledge.

## **APPENDIX – GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Chebucto Peninsula** means all those lands and waters to the north, west, and south of Halifax bounded by the Hammonds Plains Road on the north and encompassed by Atlantic Ocean on the east, south, and west including all coastal islands except McNabs and Lawlor Islands.

**Collaboration** means decisions are made in a way that synergistically blends differing ideas into courses of action that all parties can support. The use of consensus building approaches strengthens commitment for key decisions and builds a collaborative culture.

**Ecological Integrity** means a condition whereby the native elements and associated community structures, processes, and functions of an ecosystem are intact and likely to persist into the future.

**Management** means the acts of recommending policies, and planning, directing, and supervising activities that carry out those policies that have been approved by those in authority.

**Public lands** means lands owned by municipal, provincial, or federal departments.

**Public waters** means fresh and salt water above and below the ground, estuaries, marshes, bogs, and all interfaces between land and sea under the jurisdiction of municipal, provincial, or federal departments.

**Stewardship** means caring for the land and associated resources so that healthy ecosystems can be passed on to future generations.

January 2008



## Special Report from the Chair

### The Trust's Seven-Point Strategy and Framework for Environmental Stewardship

Friends of the Trust:

Some members have been asking about the Trust's Seven Point Strategy wondering how it has been utilised in the past several years. I thought you might find a review of historical events of some help in your understanding of the work undertaken by the Trust since the endorsement of the Seven Point Strategy at the AGM of 2004. This Report will also explain why the Seven Point Strategy was set aside in favour of the Framework for Collaborative Stewardship initiative in 2005.

#### **Background**

The Halifax Region Municipality (HRM) is unique in having large tracts of unoccupied natural wilderness within easy commuting distance of the urban core. These lands are home to a variety of wildlife, which include endangered species such as the dwindling herd of indigenous moose and rare lichens on the granite bluffs, as well as a rich variety of native plant and animal species. Traditionally these natural assets have been enjoyed by local hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts, unfortunately, this precious natural habitat is increasingly threatened by encroaching urban development.

Mindful of how generations of local area residents have used and cared for this land, and inspired by the more formally organized work of community groups such as the [Eastern Chebucto Peninsula Community Planning Group](#), the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization, the Terence Bay and Area C@P Site, and the Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea Rails to Trails Association, and inspired by the formation of new community organizations such as the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, in 2004 the Trust developed a Seven-Point Strategy ("the Strategy") to protect the 27,000 acres of public lands bounded by Highways 103 and 333 - land that FBWHT now refers to "The Halifax Urban Wilderness."

In early 2004, the Strategy received solid endorsement from the public at two well-attended, public meetings at the White's Lake Legion on Prospect Road and at the Seabright Legion.

#### **Strategic Direction of the Seven-Point Plan**

The Strategy became the central focus of the Trust's Annual General Meeting in the winter of 2004. At this AGM two options were placed before the membership.

**Option 1** called for the Trust to submit on behalf of its membership companion "protection and management" proposals to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to implement seven points of the Strategy.

**Option 2** called for the Trust initiate on behalf of its membership legislation to protect the Crown lands bounded by Highways 103 and 333 under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*. This legislation would incorporate the spirit and provisions of the Trust's Strategy. Concurrently, the Trust would send a companion proposal to the Halifax Regional Municipality to protect HRM lands adjacent to the crown lands in the area bounded by Highways 103 and 333 in a manner that is consistent with the proposed provincial legislation

The members voted in favour of Option 1.

#### **HRM Lands Set Aside for Conservation**

Following this decision, the Trust sent a letter to HRM Councilor Gary Meade to carry forward discussions that began prior to the 2004 AGM to have the public lands at Big Five Bridges Lake and Moore's Lakes set aside for conservation. HRM acted on the Trust's recommendation, followed its internal procedures, and designated these lands "for conservation".

### **Expansion of the Trust's Mandate**

Shortly after the 2004 AGM, some 20 members attending a COCO meeting at the White's Lake Legion encouraged the Trust to expand its Strategy to the whole of the Chebucto Peninsula. To this end, the Trust modified the Strategy replacing the words "management plan" with the words "stewardship proposal" and presented it to "a community of communities" as a Framework for Collaborative Stewardship ("the Framework"). The Framework was presented to interested local groups and individuals in January 2005 and 14 groups offered to participate in a workshop to vet and refine the plan. Its aim was to establish a process through which various local groups might work with all levels of government to protect and preserve Crown Land on the Chebucto Peninsula for appropriate recreational, educational and scientific use.

The Trust saw its role as initiating, but not leading these groups to work with government. The revised approach came to be known as "a Framework for Collaborative Environmental Stewardship." The new, broader strategy was presented by the Chair at the Trust's 2005 AGM. With expressions of support from Environment Canada (federal) and HRM (municipal), the membership endorsed the broader approach.

### **Foundation for Collaboration: The June 25 Workshop**

The Trust organized a well-attended Workshop on June 25, 2005 to determine if a "community of communities" should be formed to work with three levels of government collaboratively as environmental stewards of public lands. The Workshop endorsed and produced a "framework" for such activities. Representatives of all three levels of government participated in the proceedings as observers. On September 30, 2005, Deputy Minister Peter Underwood formally asked the Trust to assemble community representatives to work on a process that would enable the community to provide input and advice to the Department of Natural Resources for planning the use of Crown lands on the Chebucto Peninsula. Mr. Underwood's letter also invited the participation of other government departments including the Halifax Regional Municipality. The assembly identified itself as a Working Group to carry out Mr. Underwood's request.

### **The Charter for Environmental Stewardship**

The companion to this Report, the January 2008 issue of **The Bridge**, summarizes the initial 14 months achievement of the Working Group and reproduces the principles of a Charter for Environmental Stewardship contained in the supplement *The Chebucto Peninsula Stewardship Charter*.

### **The Seven-Point Strategy in Relation to the Charter**

Although much of the Trust's energy has been put into the activities of the Working Group and the development of the Charter for Environmental Stewardship, the objectives of the Seven-Point Strategy have not been abandoned. The following paragraphs review this work, point for point.

#### **1. Work with governments to protect the natural habitat, watersheds and wildlife on the public lands of the Chebucto Peninsula.**

During the past three years, the Trust has

- met with HRM staff and various provincial and federal departments to express concerns we have had relative to the protection of natural habitats, watershed and wildlife on the public lands of the Chebucto Peninsula.
- repeatedly expressed concern about the potential for impacts by development to the Woodens River, Nine Mile River, and Prospect River Watersheds (Drysedale Bog)
- written letters to government departments, made presentations at the Western Region Community Council, participated in public consultations.
- taken part in consultation concerning the development of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Protected Area
- attended each consultation held with respect to the HRM Regional Planning activities.

- held numerous meetings with D of T&PW around water quality and loss of habitat issues related to the twinning of Hwy 103 at Cranberry Lake.
- collaborated with Inland Fisheries around fish studies undertaken at Big Five Bridges Lake and Moores Lake, and more recently with monitoring projects on both the Woodens River and Prospect River systems to ensure that health issues of these water systems are addressed. These projects are ongoing and being undertaken in collaboration with the Community Environmental Monitoring Network at SMU and other community groups.
- supported DNR 's efforts to monitor the moose population on the CP when there were GPS collared moose with data collection from 2004-2006.
- supported the Moose Recovery program Our members provide ongoing information about moose activity and sightings to Jenny Costello at DNR .
- helped to broker and monitor an agreement among environmental and OHV groups to limit OHV riding to hard-packed roads and not build any new trails on Public Lands. (See Strategy #3)
- collaborated with the Safety Minded ATV Club and the Jeep Club to complete a number of clean-ups of old cars and other refuse left along the three roads in the Crown Land block.
- worked to develop a model that would provide a legitimate forum for the legal stewards and the registered community groups to work together to develop and implement a long term management plan for the public land of the Chebucto Peninsula. Members of the Trust have sat as community members of the Working Group from January 2006 to March 2007 (See the January 2008 issue of **The Bridge**). In addition, numerous meetings have been held with officers of NSEL, DNR, and HRM. (Also see Strategy #7)

## 2. Promote low impact activities

The Trust has been instrumental in promoting various low-impact activities through our collaborations with other community groups. More specifically, it has

- promoted canoeing activities through articles in **The Bridge**.
- supported Canoe Kayak NS in its efforts to produce a brochure of canoe routes on the CP.
- worked with the Safety Minded ATV Club and WRWEO to ensure that the Bluff Trail remains a non-motorized trail.
- served on the Bluff Trail Committee.
- supported the Rails to Trails system by promoting and attending events on Trails day, attending AGM's and sharing ideas at COCO Meetings.
- promoted hiking and other low-impact activities as we begin work on a trail map for the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road.
- produced a Flora Brochure and are about to issue a new Lichens Brochure to provide education and draw interest in and visits to the Bluff Trail by persons wishing to know more about the flora of the area.
- coordinated our activities with the geocaching community, the Visitor Information Centre at Tantallon, and other tourism businesses by providing information about hiking in the area. Our Flora brochure is well received and in high demand.

### **3. Promote responsible off-road vehicle use, but restrict use on lands with wilderness values. |**

In 2001, the Trust signed an agreement with the Safety Minded ATV Club and WRWEO to preserve the Bluff Trail as a non-motorized trail under Letter of Authority with DNR and WRWEO. Members of the Safety Minded ATV Club also agreed to ride on the hard-packed roads already in existence, namely Joshua Slocum Trail (DNR's fire road), the Old Halifax Road (Glen Haven to Hubley) and the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road (Glen Margaret to Goodwood). In exchange the Trust and WRWEO were to help the ATV Community find a connector route that would get them to the Joshua Slocum Trail (DNR's Fire Road) and access to the above roads that exist in the public lands of DNR and HRM.

- Working together since 2004, the Trust and Safety Minded ATV Club worked together with DNR to find a connector route from the rail bed adjacent to Hwy 3 across a narrow strip of Crown Land to the Joshua Slocum Trail (DNR's Fire Road). The ATV community has since compiled and submitted a Business Plan to DNR for the building of this trail.
- During the OHV Voluntary Planning process, the Trust presented a submission to the VP Committee. Following the release of the 48 recommendations of the VP, members of the Trust, Safety Minded ATV Club, BLT Rails to Trails, and St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails met to review the recommendations and produced a composite report back to the VP committee.

### **4. Encourage study of the land so we can help maintain its ecological integrity**

The Trust has undertaken environmental monitoring projects in the Prospect River system and on the Woodens River system to establish base line information that will be studied and compared over time to monitor the effects of urbanization and climate change.

- University students who conducted the Flora survey were surprised to find so many plant species so close to the urban centre.
- The Trust's lichens survey has been helpful in augmenting our knowledge about climate change and urbanization.
- The Trust works closely with the SMU Environmental Monitoring Network, and has worked with the staff at the Biology Department at Dalhousie and with the NS Youth Conservation Corps at DoE&L. Many students continue to utilise the area to study a variety of flora and fauna subjects.
- The Trust has developed a GIS Mapping database into which information had been placed about water quality studies undertaken by others as well as location of plant species. The Trust will soon upload its locations of lichens species. The Trust has documented hard-packed roads with GPS co-ordinates including intersections of trails from other lands.

### **5. Establish educational and interpretative programs for school children, residents and tourists**

In the area of educational and interpretative programs, the Trust has

- made various overtures to the 13 area schools to garner interest and participation in Environment Canada's Naturewatch and Thousand Eyes programs. Most regrettably formal partnerships and activities with the schools have not materialized due to time and curriculum restrictions.
- established contact with youth groups to make them aware of the Naturewatch and Thousand Eyes programs.
- supported the Learn to Fish program as it teaches young people respect for fish, fish habitat, and good fishing practices.
- supported the new Five Bridges Junior High School in Hubley by providing history and written information to assist them in their learning more about the wilderness areas south of the school.

- collaborated with WRWEO to promote educational walks on International Trails Day on the Bluff Trail.
- sponsored a Flora Walk when the Flora Brochure was published and plan to sponsor a Lichens Walk in 2008 following the March 4 public launch of the Lichens Brochure.
- held two successful May Fair In the Park gatherings in 2006 and 2007 to publicly highlight the ecological attributes of the area. These activities are designed for families to come together at the Gerry Lawrence Park at Lewis Lake to learn about the attributes of the area.
- served as a clearing house of printed materials and community resource people to provide information about the area and hands on activities like bird watching.
- shared information with government departments, the Western Region Community Council, COCO.
- published **The Bridge**, the Trust's newsletter, and wrote newspaper articles to help make people aware of the attributes of the area and to raise awareness about impacts to the ecological integrity of the lands.
- sponsored a Warbler Walk at the Gerry Lewis Provincial Park in May /June to highlight the presence of the 14 nesting species of the 21 nesting species of warblers found in NS.
- plan to publish a brochure about the Warblers of the Gerry Lawrence Provincial Park authored and illustrated by Hans Toom in concert with DNR, the NS Bird Society, and private benefactors.

**6. Encourage and support preservation of special places that have natural, historical or cultural significance.**

- Over the past several years, Trust members and friends have provided access to a number of old graveyards that were blocked by trees that fell during Hurricane Juan and subsequent storms. They then marked the locations with signs, took pictures, recorded tombstone inscriptions, and established GPS coordinates. This information has been shared with HRM Planning, and other members of government. The public has been made aware of these sites through articles in **The Bridge** and the **Masthead News**. The information has also been placed in our GIS data base.
- Possible locations of other special places have been identified and visited with Roger Lewis, Native Archaeologist for the province of NS.
- The Trust plans to record the locations of old farms, and other places of natural, historical and cultural significance located along the Old St. Margaret's Bay from Spryfield through to Glen Margaret through the publication of a brochure. Discussions with other groups who share this interest are ongoing as the Trust continues to gather information about this once significant road.

**7. Implement and co-ordinate a community based Management Plan so those who use the land can become stewards of the land.**

Since its inception in 2001 the Trust has devoted considerable time and energies to consult with the public and with governments to develop a model for collaborative stewardship. The model is intended to provide significant community input into the planning and management of public lands.

The Trust recognizes that government (more specifically DNR) is the legal steward of Crown lands and has responsibilities that do not allow them to relinquish their authority. At the same time, this authority is given government in the public interest and the Trust believes that the public can play a meaningful role in planning and managing public lands through an open, transparent, and consensual process. The Trust has used the words "collaborative stewardship" to describe this model.

Formal work on this model with government has been suspended in favour of testing a list of guiding principles in an initial "connectivity" project that will review the challenges and opportunities for

maintaining the ecological, cultural, and recreational integrity of the Peninsula's wilderness areas. The Trust disagrees with this course of action and believes that mere guiding principles are insufficient without a framework of agreed upon procedures to implement the principles.

On November 2, 2007, the Deputy Minister of DNR sent a letter to the members of the Working Group to thank them for their time and talents suggesting that their objectives were accomplished. The Trust takes the position that much remains to be done and responded to Deputy Minister's letter with a list of questions about how the work of the Working Group will be utilised in future work around the planning and management of Public Lands. The Trust will plan its future activities in light of the Deputy Minister's answers.

### **Conclusion**

An overview of the Trust's work of the past three years clearly indicates a steadfast commitment to its founding principles and the substance of its 2004 Seven-Point Strategy. Work on a Charter for Environmental Stewardship has been a principal occupation, but certainly not at the expense of the Trust's broader commitments.

However the Deputy Minister answers the Trust's questions regarding the unfinished work of the Working Group, the Trust will continue to work towards its goal of ensuring that public land on the Chebucto Peninsula remains available for appropriate public use. We sincerely hope that DNR and HRM will see merit in continuing to work with the Trust to develop a structured framework for planning and managing public lands in collaboration with registered community groups and other stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Beth McGee, Chair  
Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust

*The Trust welcomes your comments on this Report from the Chair. Please address you comments to [jemcgee@hfx.eastlink.ca](mailto:jemcgee@hfx.eastlink.ca).*