



# The Bridge

*Chair*  
Beth McGee  
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## Message from the Chair

January 2009

*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*

**FBWHT**  
*Annual General Meeting*  
Tuesday, March 31, 7pm  
St. Nicholas Church

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Friends:  
The curtain has risen on a new year. Our environmental work continues to be filled with challenges and exciting new vistas.

Trust members serve on the Steering Committee of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition. Since the fall the work of this committee has gained momentum and inches closer to the goal of achieving protection of the public lands of the Chebucto Peninsula under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. Several key meetings have occurred and will be reported upon elsewhere in this issue.

Members of the CWC Steering Committee and the Western Common Wilderness Citizen Advisory Committee met on January 7 to discuss ways these two committees could work together. On January 28 members of the CWC Steering Committee met with staff at Environmental Design and Management (EDM) who are consulting with community groups, gathering information and developing a management plan for the Western Common.

There have been further delays at the Department of Environment in the setting up of the promised Round Table Discussions to discuss how we as community members can get our environmental concerns addressed in a more timely matter. Renewed efforts on this matter are forthcoming and with them we anticipate a date for community groups and government agencies to meet.

A new project, the restoring of a wetland is under discussion with the Department of Environment. This collaboration has the potential to involve a number of environmental, recreational and educational groups.

The Trust and Inland Fisheries hosted a Public Meeting on January 27 to review the results of fish sampling undertaken in June 2008 on the lower lakes of the Wooden's River system by Jacques Whitford.

Many Thanks to Shelley Webb of St. Margaret's Bay Regional Tourism Development Association for her editing work on *The Walking Guide to the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road*. With her help we move forward towards publishing.

Planning is underway for our AGM on March 31, 7pm at St. Nicholas Church. Please join us to learn about our projects for 2009. I wish to give many thanks to our Board members and Trust Advisors for their support and hard work over the past year.

Thanks to all for your good efforts and continuing support of our goal to protect the Public Lands bound by Highways 103 and 333.

Beth

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### Web Address

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### **Work of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition Steering Committee**

The Chebucto Wilderness Coalition continues to gather momentum in its goal of legislated protection of the public lands within Highways 103 and 333.

Following a meeting on October 21 with David Morse and his staff, the CWC Steering Committee received a letter of support from the NS Dept of Natural Resources endorsing the project in principle on the strength of its preliminary assessment of the lands. Judy Streach, MLA for Chester St. Margaret's sent her letter of support on December 17. Following a January 7 meeting with Liberal Leader Stephen McNeill, the Liberal Caucus sent a very strong endorsement for WAPA protection. On January 21, a CWC delegation met with Darrell Dexter and Bill Estabrooks, who promised an NDP letter of support.

In addition to these recent endorsements, the CWC now has on file endorsements from Geoff Regan, MP, Bill Estabrooks, MLA Timberlea-Prospect, the full HRM Council, and more than 35 organizations, including environmental groups, resident associations, recreation groups, businesses, tourism associations, OHV groups, and private individuals. Hundreds of individuals have also signed petitions in support of WAPA protection of the "Chebucto wilderness" lands.

To keep the public apprised of its work, the Steering Committee is issuing periodic reports. It has issued five Reports to date and has plans to issue several others in the weeks ahead. A complete collection of the Reports can be found on the Trust web site: [www.fivebridgestrust.ca](http://www.fivebridgestrust.ca)

### **What's New at COCO**

The November COCO meeting provided an opportunity for community group representatives, elected officials and HRM staff to share information regarding a number of important activities that impact our area.

Considerable meeting time was taken up with discussion about planning for the Wilderness Common of the Western Common. John Charles, Planner, and Reg Rankin, Councilor were present to answer questions raised. Updated Information can now be found on the HRM website: [www.halifax.ca/RealPropertyPlanning/WCWA/index.html](http://www.halifax.ca/RealPropertyPlanning/WCWA/index.html)

BLT R2T took part in the Dec 5<sup>th</sup> commemoration for Paula Gallant. Five new benches have been installed with funding from Democracy 250. Resurfacing of 3km of trail and extensive brush cutting have been done for about 5 km. The difficulty in obtaining insurance coverage for volunteers working with trail groups within HRM was raised. BLT R2T has submitted an application to the Positive Aging Fund to purchase Nordic Walking poles to assist seniors who wish to walk. There was discussion about the formation of the coalition for Active Transportation on trails. A Safety Minded ATV Club member noted that if their proposed ATV trails system for the area is accepted by the Province much of the traffic on near urban sections of the BLT R2T trail will be greatly reduced.

St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA) has a number of initiatives underway. The key topic is a proposed HRM by-law amendment regarding a requirement for development agreements for any commercial property over 5000 sq ft. The proposal requires development agreements to incorporate values, such as local design, lighting, type of commercial use, that would complement the local and coastal nature of SMB.

Dalhousie University planning students are assisting SMBSA on an ongoing project to provide input into regional planning for St. Margarets Bay area. If you wish to provide input

Continued on page 4 COCO

**OHV Use on Chebucto Peninsula Lands  
Proposed for Protection under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act**

At each of its meetings with elected officials and government bureaucrats, the CWC Steering Committee has been complimented on two points: (1) the way it has built an infrastructure of community cooperation, and (2) the way it has dealt with the difficult issue of OHV use on public land that may be legislatively protected. With respect to these two points, all political leaders and government officials have identified the CWC as a model of successful community planning.

The good working relationship between environmental groups of the CWC and the organized ATV organizations dates back to the fall of 2001 when members of the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO) and the Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust (FBWHT) met with the members of the Safety Minded ATV Association to discuss the building of the Bluff Trail and its use as a non-motorized trail.

The members of the Safety Minded ATV Association agreed not to use the Bluff Trail, not to cut any new unauthorised trails in the Crown land block, and to use only the established hard-packed roads on in the area. There are three such roads on public lands within the Crown land block bounded by Highways 103 and 333:

- (1) Old Halifax Road,
- (2) Joshua Slocum trail (also known as the Fire Road), and
- (3) Old St. Margarets Bay Road (also known as the Old Coach Road)

In view of this gesture, and with help from the ATV Club to clean up the trash along these roads, FBWHT agreed to help the ATV club establish a north-south connector trail to the Old Coach Road via the Joshua Slocum Trail and the Fire Road. Consultation occurred with a number of community groups including WRWEO and rails to trails groups. Representatives of the ATV club, FBWHT worked with DNR staff to locate a suitable connector trail.

The trail that was agreed upon would be accessed from the St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails at a point just east of the junction of Highways 3 and 213 (Hammond's Plains Road), cross Highway 3 onto the property of a private landowner, and proceed east across Crown land for approximately two-and -a-half kilometres to connect with the Joshua Slocum Trail. The Department of Natural Resources has tentatively approved this route. Once the route is formally approved, members of the Safety Minded ATV Club will work with the departments of Natural Resources and Transportation and Infrastructure to complete the required construction.

These same community groups that worked to establish the connector trail, together with the Resource Opportunities Centre at Terence Bay and the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association are all among the founding members of the CWC. The good-will and cooperation that has always characterized the working relationships of these community groups has continued in support of legislated protection of the area.

With respect to ATV use in the Crown land proposed for legislated protection, the CWC Steering Committee has adopted the following position regarding the use of off-highway vehicles on public lands:

*"The Coalition recognizes the contributions and importance of registered organizations that are committed to both preserving the environment in its natural state and*

**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:

**March 26**

**May 21**

**July 16**

**Everyone Welcome!**

**Western Region  
Community Council  
Meetings**

**February 23**

**March 23**

**April 27**

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

Continued on page 4 OHV



**COCO** continued (from page 2)

please contact: Alexi Baccardax, Candidate, Master of Environmental Studies, School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University. Tel: 902-406-6130, Email: [alexibaccardax@dal.ca](mailto:alexibaccardax@dal.ca)

On January 15 community representatives met to share information and community intelligence on a number of topics.

Volunteers are required for the Master Laser Sailing Competition to be held in August 2009 at the St. Margaret Sailing Club. A number of community groups will be assisting in organizing activities for the families of sailors. Housing for visitors and places for campers are also required. Interested persons can contact Commodore Wayne Trowse.

Residents in the Timberlea area are very upset over the proposed closure of Sacred Heart Church and other smaller Catholic churches in the area. Parishioners are discussing what can be done to keep their place of worship open.

The Western Common Wilderness Common Citizens Advisory Committee hosted two public Open Houses. Consulting firm EDM has been hired to help prepare a Concept Plan and then a Management Plan for the area. A Public Meeting was held on January 28 at Halifax West High School to discuss the boundaries for the Bayer's Lake Business Park and Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area.

The St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association will host a Community Forum on March 28 -29 to discuss and make recommendations for Visioning and Zoning for the Tantallon area. HRM Staff will audit the process. A schedule for Watershed Studies in the area is also under discussion; it has been suggested that the two processes could occur concurrently.

Newly elected HRM Councillor Peter Lund has put forth an amendment concerning development agreements. This matter comes before HRM Council on February 3.

The ATV Community has established 15 Trail Wardens for this area with a roster of daily, weekly and monthly patrols planned. Work continues on the connector trail between the St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails and the Joshua Slocum Trail.

The work of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition continues. Meetings have been slated with various political leaders to update them on our work and to solicit their support.

The next COCO meeting will be held on March 26. Community groups are encouraged to send a representative. For more information contact Beth McGee at 823-2245.

**Editor -Tom Musial**  
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**Layout - Jeff Parks**

**Charitable Donations**

Charitable donations to support the work of the Trust may be made by contacting **Catherine King** at, **902- 823-3433**  
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](mailto:petencil@eastlink.ca)  
and type "subscribe" in the subject line.

**OHV** continued (from page 3)

*promoting safe and responsible use of off-road vehicles (OHV).*

*The Coalition recommends that three roads that cross public lands bounded by Highways 103 and 333— the Old Coach Road, the Joshua Slocum Fire Road, and the Old Halifax road—should be exempted under the provisions of the Wilderness Areas Protection Act for OHV use by members in good standing of such OHV organizations."*

The CWC Steering Committee believes that the three hard-packed roads within the designated area should continue to be enjoyed by all recreational users and recommends that In the event these public lands are protected under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, the three hard-packed roads noted above should be excluded from the wilderness area and designated as multiple-use trails.