



The Bridge

Chair

Beth McGee

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Message from the Chair

May 2009

Friends:

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

The environmental movement has enjoyed some recent successes with the final designation of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes as a Wilderness Area. Our colleagues at Ship Harbour Long Lake are moving closer to the final designation for their area. On the Chebucto Peninsula the campaign of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition moves along at a steady pace. The work of Trust members serving on this committee will be detailed elsewhere in this edition.

Meetings of the Council of Community Organizations were held on January 29 and March 26. The May meeting will be held on May 28. COCO, now in its eighth year has continued to provide a most useful forum for community members to meet bi-monthly to share information about issues of interest in their communities on the west side of the Chebucto Peninsula.

Through the winter meetings have been held between community groups, the Department of Inland Fisheries, Staff from Stantec (formerly Jacques Whitford) to discuss ongoing issues on the Wooden's River system, the Prospect River system and to plan for water quality monitoring and other work to be undertaken on those two river systems in 2009.

Our AGM was held on March 31. Many Thanks to our Board of Trustees and our Advisors for their continued dedicated work on our many projects.

The Mainland moose of the Chebucto Peninsula were highlighted at an information session provided by DNR staff at a Public Meeting held on May 6.

Thanks to the NS Department of Environment for organizing the long awaited Round Table Discussion held on Wednesday May 13. Community groups and government agencies met to discuss how we as community members could get our environmental concerns addressed in a more timely matter.

We are moving closer to the publishing of *The Walking Guide to the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road*. In the next quarter we hope to be able to complete the work required to go to press.

Please join us on May 24 from 12 noon to 3 p.m. when we celebrate spring at *May Fair in the Park* where we give thanks to the Community for their support of our work at Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park, Lewis Lake.

Thanks as always to all for your good efforts and continuing support of our goal to protect the Public Lands bound by Highways 103 and 333 under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

Beth

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The Interface of HRM and Provincial Wilderness Areas

Since the last issue of The Bridge, representatives of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition (CWC) have engaged in dialogue with the Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee (WCWAC) and Environment Development Management (EDM). WCWAC is an advisory committee appointed by HRM, and EDM is a private consulting group hired by HRM. Both are charged with the task of recommending a Master Plan for the municipal Western Common lands.

The work of these two groups is important to the CWC in that the municipal lands of the Western Common and the Crown lands that the CWC seeks to protect have a large common border along the Nine Mile River.

Discussions among the three groups has been constructive. Dialogue with the CWC has focused on four general topics: (1) the best way to protect the two proposed wilderness areas, (2) appropriate recreational use of these lands, (3) ways to avoid further stress on the natural environment by the municipal landfill, and (4) ways to establish connectivity for human and wildlife movement between the proposed wilderness areas and other protected areas on the Chebucto Peninsula.

The CWC Alliance

Our readers ask what groups and individuals and groups have formally support protection of the public lands bounded by Highways 103 and 333 under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. Here is a current list.

Political

- HRM Western Region Council
- HRM Regional Council (reported in letter from Municipal Clerk dated June 30, 2008)
- Bill Estabrooks, MLA, Timberlea-Prospect
- Judy Streach, MLA, Chester-St. Margaret's Bay
- Department of Natural Resources (in principle, based on preliminary assessment)
- Department of Environment (in principle, now conducting a thorough assessment)
- Stephen McNeil on behalf of the Liberal Caucus
- Darrell Dexter on behalf of the NDP Caucus
- Geoff Regan, MP

Environmental

- Blue Mountain Birch Cove Wilderness Society
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Ecology Action Centre
- Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust
- Halifax Field Naturalists
- Halifax Regional Trails Association
- Nova Scotia Environmental Network
- SMU Community-Based Monitoring Network
- St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
- Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization

Residents

- Cambrian's Cove Homeowners' Assoc
- Juniper Silver Birch Property Owner's Association
- Lake of the Woods Homeowners Association
- Prospect Peninsula Residents' Association
- Sheldrake Lake Residents' Association
- Three Brooks Homeowners Association

Recreational

- ATVANS
- BLT R2T
- Canoe/Kayak NS
- Halifax Trail Runners
- Safety Minded ATV Association
- St Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails
- Trout Nova Scotia

Other

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Halifax-Dartmouth
- Hinterlands Development Limited
- Mainland South Heritage Society
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- St. Margaret's Bay Regional Tourism and Development Association
- Ralph Wheadon
- Resource Opportunities Centre
- Three Brooks Development Corporation Limited
- The Trail Shop
- (Dr.) Wilfrid Creighton

Community Round Table Discussion

On May 13 a Community Round Table Discussion hosted by the NS Department of Environment was held at the Future Inn in Halifax. Representatives from P.R.O.B.E, WRWEO, the Trust and Peter Lund, HRM Councillor for District 23 met with representatives from NS Department of Environment, Environment Canada and Department of Fisheries and Oceans to hear presentations about Environmental Emergency Response in Nova Scotia, including the work of each department, how departments work together and how we as citizens can access the resources of the departments represented.

There is an Environmental Emergency Line 1-800-565-1633 that is available 24/7 365 days of the year. All calls going to that line will be evaluated, a determination will be made about who is responsible for the incident and responsibility will be assigned to ensure that the matter gets addressed. Active incidents such as an oil spill into salt-water as well as chronic matters can be reported to the 1-800 line.

The information presented was most helpful. Regrettably there was not enough time to present and discuss some of the recurring themes that community groups often are called upon to address. Some participants were able to stay after the formal meeting ended for a further discussion which proved to be most helpful.

Many Thanks to Don Feldman and Cory Aldous of the NS Department of Environment for organizing this meeting and to their colleagues at NS Department of Environment, Environment Canada and Department of Fisheries for a most informative meeting.



4th May Fair in the Park

Come celebrate spring with us! The Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust is planning its fourth May Fair to be held in Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park, Lewis Lake on Sunday, May 24 from 12 to 3. May Fair provides the Trust with the opportunity to thank the community for its ongoing support of our work and to make others aware of the scope of the work of the Trust and that of other community groups..

The event is geared to families. The main focus will be fun games for the children with prizes. There will be dancing by the Celtica Highland Dancers, a nature scavenger hunt organized by the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship and a fire engine on site. There will also be displays by local environmental groups and a free barbecue.

Our focus is to encourage people to learn about and support the proposed wilderness area for the Chebucto Peninsula.

Annual Warbler Walk-May 30, 2009

The Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust is pleased to announce that the Annual Warbler Walk will be held at Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park in Lewis Lake on Saturday, May 30 from 7 a.m. to noon.

Well known bird watching enthusiast Hans Toom will lead the hike. Birders are asked to meet at the Picnic area inside the Park at 7 a.m. The warbler walk usually takes place both in the confines of the Park and along the St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails. The Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park is the summer home of 14 species of the twenty-one species of warblers that nest in Nova Scotia.

Highlights from the meeting about the Wooden's River, Wednesday, March 18, 2009

The meeting attended by representatives of WRWEO, FBWHT, Inland Fisheries and Stantec (formerly Jacques Whitford) was called to discuss problems for trout on the Wooden's River and to begin to work on a plan to address issues.

Known events, including history of fires in the 22,000 acres Crown Land block area from 1954 to the present and environmental disaster in 2004 on the Wooden's River were outlined. There was discussion of the 1989 loss of mayfly on lakes in the Wooden's River and reasons for their comeback on Hubley Big Lake. Evidence of other hatches was noted.

The topic of pH drew much comment. Trout start getting stressed when the pH reaches 4.2. Leaching from fires, on salt-granite bedrock belt, lowers pH. A review of the Five Bridges Lake and Moore's Lake established that pH levels in both lakes have remained at 4.8 with little change over many years. Of the ten lakes on the Wooden's River studied between 2000-2002, none had a pH lower than 4.8. Birch Hill Lake is known to have the highest pH at 5.1-5.6. We do not have pH data prior to 1989. Discussion of spike in pH with snowmelt was noted. It was agreed we should take pH readings in March and again soon after the ice is out. A suggestion was made that sampling should be done this time of year on Long Lake, Gates Lake, Albert Bridge. In March 2009 Bob Chambers and Ken Nickerson did some sampling through the ice.

Information was shared about trout populations and competition with spiny fish, bass intrusion in the Nine Mile system with potential for impact at Big Five Bridge Lake.

Questions and discussion arose on the work that Stantec is doing, who is involved in fish tissue testing. Work this year will include sampling of benthic invertebrates and spawning habitat with the plan to include Five Island Lake, Hubley Big Lake, Long Lake, Ben Miller, Croucher, Gates, Millyard and Albert Bridge on the Wooden's River. Questions to be examined include what type of diversity of invertebrates exists and what is a possible cause of decline in trout populations. Stantec staff will target particular areas where historically there have been big trout populations to determine the status now; is there still food or habitat for them? They want to identify and target specific areas to examine with the hope of finding a fairly diverse invertebrate community. Additionally they want to determine if spawning is occurring in a healthy way in these lakes. They want help from fishers to assist them in examining spawning habitat in streams.

There is no single place where all of the studies done on the river by many universities are collected. CABIN, Trout Nova Scotia, Adopt-a-Stream have all done work on the river from the 1990's onward. Oliver Woods completed a thesis in 2007. Lots of data is held by SMU and CWRS (much of it is proprietary). We need to look at what's been done well and make use of it. Some water quality data has been stored in the Trust's GIS database. We need to put information together in chronological order.

Methodological issues were noted. While there is a lot of data, critical details of methodology are missing for much of it and lots of studies were done with single samples.

Volunteers need training in taking measurements with a YSI. SMU will be offering training for volunteers as part of a program to establish standardization in methodology for citizen water quality monitoring efforts.

Important municipal and provincial initiatives are underway including HRM Water Quality Management Plan and the NS Environment's 's Water Quality Strategy. Other departments and agencies have jurisdictions. (See Round Table article)

The Meeting concluded with identifying the questions we want answered in our dealing with a complex system. We need to look at what information we already have. We need clearly defined questions, then have clearly defined methodology to begin to pursue them. How do we go forward? The suggestion of maintaining communication by a web based discussion forum will be looked at further by FBWHT and WRWEO. What is clear is that we need to develop a plan among the groups who have agreed to collaborate. Collection of data and type needs to be agreed upon. Answers for questions that follow need to be found. Where do we send the data? How will it be used, shared. Who will interpret data? Will SMU play a role?

As already noted, Stantec sought help from the anglers about identifying spawning habitat. Representatives will work together to develop a plan.

Thanks to Don Maclean and Inland Fisheries who gave the Trust a YSI unit for use in their water quality monitoring work on the Wooden's River and the Prospect River systems.

Water Quality Monitoring for the Prospect River System –2009

The 2009 plan for water sampling for the Prospect River watershed will include collection of water samples from Big Indian, Little Indian, Otter, Ragged and Dick Lakes. Wayne Rogers will look after the organizing of the sampling on these lakes.

A new area of concern has been brought to the attention of the sampling team for the Prospect River watershed. Drysdale Bog is recognized as being the headwater of the Terence Bay River watershed and some of the water from this bog drains into the Prospect River watershed. It has been reported that the water quality of Peter Lake is now being negatively impacted as the mayfly hatch has diminished considerably over the past three years. Additionally there are concerns about the changing appearance of the trout in this lake. These concerns have been brought to the attention of Inland Fisheries. There is agreement that our sampling program be expanded to include Partridge Book and Peters Lake to see if we can isolate the reason for the change in water quality. Also local angler LeRoy Hill and his friends have been asked to catch and freeze 6 trout from Peters Lake. These fish will be analyzed by the Fish Vets. There has been a request made by the McDonald Lake Residents' Association to join us in this work. Nichols Lake and McDonald Lake will be added to the water sampling work this year. John Cascadden will oversee this part of the work.



The water samples will be analyzed by the Agricultural College lab in Truro thanks to the support of Don McLean of Inland Fisheries who arranges the payment for the analysis.

Moose Presentation on May 6, 2009

Mainland moose, which are listed as an endangered species under the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act, occur in the Proposed Chebucto Wilderness Area. On May 6, 2009, moose experts Tony Nette, Doug Archibald, and Sara Spencer from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources gave a talk at the Tantallon Public Library on the current status of this herd with particular attention to the impact of human activity on their movement and chances of survival.

There are only about 1000 Mainland Moose in Nova Scotia and the Chebucto group, about 30 animals, is exceptionally small. The Mainland Moose was listed as endangered in 2003, which provides some legal protection to the moose and their habitat. (The Cape Breton moose are a western subspecies which was introduced into Cape Breton after the eastern moose went locally extinct. That population is now about 5000 and is not endangered.)

Surveys conducted in 2003 and 2008 suggest the Chebucto population is more or less stable. Surveys and radio tagging suggests they are no longer moving off of the peninsula. The DNR wants to hear about sightings, live animals, scat, antlers... anything; it is illegal to keep discarded antlers. There are forms with the hunting regulations for reporting sightings. The Chebucto moose in particular seem very wary of humans, whether on foot or on ATVs.

We had only about 10 minutes for discussion. One participant suggested that Protected Area status for the Chebucto Wilderness would help protect the moose because such status gives the Minister of the Environment special management authority.

Wetland Hot Line

If you become aware of an action that is having a negative impact on a wetland, water-course, or a matter that is a chronic problem, please call **1-800-565-1633**, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Give as much detail as possible so that your matter can be directed to the proper resource and addressed in a timely matter.

COCO

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

**May 28
Safety Minded ATV Club**

September 24

Everyone Welcome!

**Western Region
Community Council
Meetings**

May 25

June 22

July 27

August 24

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



Highlights of the AGM on March 31,2009

The Trust's AGM was held on Tuesday, March 31, 2009 at the St. Nicholas Church, in Westwood Hills. The members of the Board of Trustees and the Trust Advisors have had an exceptionally busy year. Chair Beth McGee thanked them for their hard work.

Tom Musial Chair of the Steering Committee for the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition gave a report on the work of the Steering Committee seeking to protect the Crown Land Block bound by Highways 3 and 333 and the HRM Lands at Big Five Bridge Lake and Moore's Lake under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. This report and other reports of the work of this committee are found under the heading Coalition on the Trust website.

The Trust is a member group of the Coalition. A number of Trust members work on this project.

Trustees Eleanor Lindsay, Jim Law and Cathy Conrad were recognised for their contributions to the work of the Trust during their three-year terms. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Eleanor Lindsay in recognition of her 6 years service on the Board and to Cilla Dawson for her dedicated work as Chair of three successful Mayfair in the Park celebrations.

We welcomed new Trustees Denise Caines, John Cascadden and Harry Ward and returning Trustee Eleanor Lindsay.

The Activity Reports, Treasurers' Report for the year as well as the Work Plan for 2009-2010 were presented and are now posted on the Trust website.

Following the business meeting our Guest Speaker, Bob Guscott, Naturalist and GIS Analyst with Forest Protection at the Department of Natural resources gave a most informative presentation entitled "Landscapes and Natural History of the Chebucto Peninsula ". His photos of the area we wish to protect were beautiful.

Thanks to all for the work in planning and organizing our AGM 2009.

COCO Meeting on May 28!!

The May Meeting of the Council of Community Organizations will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 28 at the Safety Minded ATV Club, Station Road, and Head of St.Margaret's Bay. The hosting group is the St.. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association.

With the upcoming provincial election there will be many issues to discuss. There are a number of planning initiatives and environmental concerns on both the Peggy's Cove Road and the Prospect Road to be shared with those who attend. We will be giving updates about a number of activities ongoing in our communities. A few of the highlights will include further information about the Community Questionnaire that emanated from the March 27& 28 Planning /Visioning discussions about Tantallon/Cross Roads . Water quality work on both the Wooden's River and the Prospect River systems will be reviewed. Feedback from the Round Table Discussion between government agencies and community groups held on May 13 will be given. The work of the Chebucto Peninsula Coalition set up to seek protection of public lands bound by Highways 103 and 333 under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act will be reviewed. A report will be given on the May 6 information meeting about Mainland Moose. Plans for Celebrations for International Trails Day on June 6 will be shared. Information about BioBlitz 2009 scheduled for June 5&6 at Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area will be given.

Jean Harris of BLT R2T will give a demonstration on the proper use of Nordic Walking Sticks. She will bring some Nordic Walking sticks for us to use.

Please plan to attend the COCO Meeting to highlight the work of your organization or community and to share information.

COCO meetings are open to representatives of community-based organizations on the Chebucto Peninsula or persons interested in community and environmental activities on the Chebucto Peninsula. COCO Meetings provide opportunity to share community intelligence and to ensure the various communities and organizations are in a position to take positive action to preserve the environment and the lifestyle of our unique communities. All Welcome. Contact Beth McGee at 823- 2245 to obtain further information

The next COCO Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 24, 2009

**Notes about previous COCO meetings can be found on the Trust Website: www.fivebridgestrust.ca

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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

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Cilla Dawson