



The Bridge

Chair

Beth McGee

jemcgee@eastlink.ca



Message from the Chair

July 2008

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

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Spring is a time of rejuvenation and embarking on new ventures. Following our AGM on April 3, a group of community organizations including Wooden's River Watershed Environmental organization (WRWEO), St.Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA), Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails (BLT R2T) , the Trust, Safety Minded ATV, and Terence Bay Resource Opportunities Centre formed the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition to seek protection of the public lands bound by Highways 103 &333.

May was an incredibly busy month with the public consultation relating to the Ship Harbour Long Lake area's candidacy as a designated Wilderness Area, a public meeting about the PCB situation on the Woodens River system, a Warbler Walk, the Trust's annual May Fair in the Park celebration, the Learn2 Fish program held at Prospect Elementary School and Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park, and the May meeting of the Council of Community Organizations.

The highlight of Environment Week was a meeting on June 2 with Environment Minister Mark Parent and his staff with representatives of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition .

More detailed information on all of these activities may be found in subsequent articles in this issue of [The Bridge](#).

Our water quality monitoring projects will continue this summer on both the Prospect River and Woodens River systems.

Volunteers in the environmental sector attended meetings of Voluntary Planning's Forest Strategy to review four areas of practice at the Department of Natural Resources. Several Trust members attended the June 9 session in Halifax. *The Department of Environment is seeking written submissions for their Water Strategy deliberations. The Trust will send written recommendations to Voluntary Planning and to the Department of Environment.* If water resources are being viewed as "the next petroleum," protecting our water resources is everyone's business.

The Trust has received funding from Nicom IT Solutions, the Chebucto West Community Health Board, Halifax Regional Municipality, the NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection and the St. Margaret's Bay Regional Tourism Development Association to print *A Walking Guide to the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road.* We are most grateful for this support. Members of the Trust have been working on this project over the past two years. We look forward to publishing the Guide in late summer and to launching the Guide in September 2008.

Trust Board members are working on some fund raising ideas to meet our operating expenses. We wish to acknowledge with many thanks the generosity of the highly acclaimed landscape artist, Peter Gough, and his wife Brenda for making available some lovely pieces of Peter's art to be used in our fund raising efforts.

Wishing each of you a safe and healthy summer.

Beth

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Prospect Elementary School students get hooked on fishing

Prospect Road elementary school students participated in the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture L2F (Learn to Fish) Program on Thursday May 29. L2F is an education program that is taken into schools across the province. It is a one-day program that includes a classroom session and fishing in a local lake.

The classroom component focuses on sport fish identification, freshwater fish habitat, what fish eat, and a fish's life cycle. Budding anglers are also shown the basics of using fishing tackle, including how to assemble a fishing rod and make proper knots.

The students from Prospect Road Elementary School were taken to Round Lake, in Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park. For many it was their first time fishing. After a demonstration of the proper casting techniques, their lines were baited up and with much enthusiasm they went fishing. Much excitement was evident from the delighted looks on their faces, especially when the Inland Fisheries stocking truck arrived with a load of speckled and rainbow trout. A short time later, one young girl was heard to say "I'm taking a rest, I've already caught four". The students were taught how to set the hook, how to take their catch off the hook and how to release any fish they weren't going to keep. It's safe to say the majority took their catch home to experience the healthy treat of a nice trout dinner. This will be an experience that they will talk about for a long time and I'm sure most of them are hooked on the sport of fishing.

Teachers find that the program fits well with the science curriculum, where students learn about freshwater fish habitat. The great bonus is that children get to experience healthy outdoor recreation. The teacher for this group was so impressed; she made a booking for next year before leaving the lake.

The program is not limited to schools, as Inland Fisheries also offer L2F to youth groups (cubs/scouts, brownies, girl guides, boys and girls clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, science and nature camps and recreation day camps).

Many Thanks to Tara Marshall of Inland Fisheries and her colleagues for their enthusiasm and leadership, and to the teachers and parents of the students at Prospect Elementary School for their organization, energy, curiosity, and fun. Thanks also to Trust volunteers Mike Lamplugh and Jim Law for their much appreciated help during the day.

L2F started in 2006 is now so popular that Inland Fisheries is taking bookings for L2F 2009.



Council of Community Organizations Meeting held on May 29, 2008

Community members met on May 29 for the May COCO Meeting hosted by St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association. Many topics were discussed, and members were updated about events occurring in our communities.

The Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails was hosting events for International Trails Day on June 7. Walkers and cyclists met at the Cola Plant in Lakeside Industrial Park and finished their trek at St. Andrew's Church for a free BBQ, games and prizes.

There was discussion about the difficulty in engaging governmental departments to investigate infestation in a stream coming from Drysdale Bog. There is hope that a round table discussion can occur with the various jurisdictions and community members to try to sort out issues related to causes, remedies, and timely government reporting of information to community. The idea of reinstating a community response team to monitor stresses on the environment was briefly discussed.

The next COCO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2008, at the Whites Lake Legion.

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Trust Forms Alliance with WRWEO
to Protect 9,800 Hectares of Public Land on the
Chebucto Peninsula under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act

Following their AGM's in March and April 2008, WRWEO and FBWHT joined forces to form the Chebucto Peninsula Wilderness Coalition with the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, the BLT Rails to Trails Association, the Safety-Minded ATV Club, the Resource Opportunities Centre, and over 35 other community organizations around the Chebucto Peninsula to preserve the urban wilderness at the doorstep of Metro Halifax.

The sole purpose of the Coalition is to protect the approximately 9,800 hectares of public lands within the boundaries of Highways 103 and 333, in the County of Halifax, Province of Nova Scotia, under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act, S.N.S., 1998, c. 27* as amended.

In addition to the Coalition members, some 35 organizations, and a number of prominent political leaders have endorsed the initiative. They include major provincial and local environmental groups, residents' associations on the Peninsula, recreational groups for hiking, fishing, running, and birding, even off highway vehicle clubs, who would continue to use certain hard-packed corridors that would be excluded from the protected wilderness on either side, businesses supplying recreational services, some developers who understand the importance of green space, and politicians from three levels of government, including HRM's Western Region Community Council (Councillors Steve Adams, Gary Meade, and Reg Rankin), Timberlea-Prospect MLA Bill Estabrooks, and Halifax West MP Geoff Regan. Additional letters of support continue to arrive.

Formal Petition to the Minister

On June 2, 2008 the former Deputy Minister of the N.S. Department of Lands and Forests (1949-69), Dr. Wilfrid Creighton, presented the Coalition's proposal for wilderness protection to Minister Parent, Nova Scotia Department of Environment, who administers the Act. It is noteworthy that Dr. Creighton, who has just celebrated his 104th birthday and is a Member of the Forestry Hall of Fame, supports the Coalition on the basis of a wealth of experience and steadfast dedication to preserving the health of the Province's natural environment. He was accompanied by Tom Musial, Coalition Chair, Richmond Campbell, WRWEO, Mike Marriott, Safety Minded ATV Club and Beth McGee, FBWHT.



L-R. Beth McGee, FBWHT; Mark Parent, Minister NSE;
 Dr. Wilfrid Creighton; Tom Musial, Coalition Chair;
 Mike Marriot, Safety Minded ATV Club;
 Richmond Campbell, WRWEO.

Rationale for Protection under the Act

The Coalition cites five main reasons for seeking protection of these lands under the Act.

First, these public lands provide the Halifax Regional Municipality with a large pristine wilderness area within a 15 minute commute from downtown Halifax that if preserved, from development and other threats, would make this urban centre, approaching 400,000 people, unique in North America in having immediate access to a wilderness area of this size. Adjacent protected areas, with the possibility of future links among them, would represent a commitment to their inherent values that would be the envy of any urban population who cares about their environment.

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Second, these lands have assets of great natural and historical value, such as the endangered mainland moose, the rare Mountain Sandwort, (*Arenaria groenlandica*), pockets of old growth forest, a large stand of jack pine on the Bluff, and over one hundred species of lichen on the first loop of The Bluff Trail alone. (<http://www.fivebridgestrust.ca/newsletter/Bridge0108.pdf>).

Third, because of these assets and the research now begun these public lands provide enormous opportunity for public education and scientific study.

Fourth, these public lands offer unique opportunities for recreation and eco-tourism within an urban context, including: (a) The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail (b) a large network of canoe/ kayak routes consisting of some twenty lakes, and rivers, and (c) traditional hunting and fishing

Fifth, the combination of candidate and proposed protected areas surrounding the urban core of Halifax – Dartmouth, including Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area to the east, Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area to the north, and the Western Commons Wilderness Area connected to the Chebucto Peninsula Wilderness Area to the West, presents a green belt of protected wilderness areas within reach of residents and visitors within the largest urban centre in Eastern Canada. The ecological significance of this vision and its powerful economic benefits would make HRM a model for the world.

Benefits of Protection under the Act

By including these public lands under the protection of the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, the Province will move closer to its commitment to protect 12% of Nova Scotia's land mass with little or no loss of potential forestry or mineral development and economic activity, since there are no valuable forestry or mineral resources in this area. More important, the Province can establish itself as a world leader in environmental sustainability for urban centres experiencing rapid expansion and at the same time reap the economic benefits of increasing the value of development along the ring of routes 103 and 333 and of the eco-tourism that this leadership would inevitably attract. In fact, when this area is combined with the other candidates for wilderness protection in HRM, what emerges is the vision of the largest urban centre in Eastern Canada surrounded by a green belt of protected wilderness, making it unique in North America and a model for the world with all the economic benefits that the realization of the vision would entail.

Unique Opportunity

The Province now has an excellent opportunity to provide major reinforcement of the Province's new Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act and make a high profile addition towards the protection of 12% of the Province that would constitute a powerful public demonstration of international leadership in environmental stewardship.

Next Steps

The HRM Western Region Council has unanimously endorsed the Coalition's objectives, as has the entire HRM Regional Council. In the weeks and months ahead the Coalition will seek the endorsement of the relevant elected provincial officials. Members of the Coalition's steering committee have requested a meeting with David Morse, Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, to brief him on the Coalition's activities. Concurrent with these political activities, the Coalition will be soliciting the support of additional individuals and community groups, expanding its supporting members, and keeping the community informed of developments.

Your Expression of Support

To receive future mailings or volunteer some time to help the Coalition achieve its objective, please provide your name and email address to Jim Muir (jwmuir@eastlink.ca).

For further details about the work of the Coalition please visit our website: www.fivebridgestrust.ca.

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The Trust Hosts Public Meeting on PCB's and the Woodens River System

The Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust hosted a public meeting on May 7 so that community members could hear a presentation about the fish studies carried out in 2007 to assess the PCB concentrations in local fish populations on Five Island Lake, Hubley Big Lake, and Sheldrake Lake. Don MacLean of Inland Fisheries, NS Fisheries and Aquaculture, was the Chair of the meeting. He was accompanied by Scott Lister, Acting District Manager for NS Environment, Chris Moir, Manager, Environmental Services Emergency Preparedness Officer, Nova Scotia Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and Dr. Malcolm Stephenson, Jacques Whitford, who gave an overview of the fish studies since 1994. Dr. Stephenson told those gathered that while the level of PCB's has dropped, they are still higher in 2007 than the level recommended for human consumption on a regular basis. Based on these findings, Don MacLean advised that his department was not prepared to remove fishing restrictions on the waterways.

The anglers were very disappointed by this news. Much discussion occurred with a number of anglers noting that the sampling did not cover all the lakes in the lower system where other factors like greater flushing action might mean a lower level of PCB's. One of the suggestions made was to consider doing some sampling on the lower lakes. Chris Moir was agreeable to reviewing this idea.

On Friday, May 30, 2008, Don Maclean at Inland Fisheries advised Trust members that NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has given a contract to Jacques Whitford to sample trout and baitfish in the lower part of the system. Staff at Inland Fisheries has asked Jacques Whitford to collect length, weight and scale samples from the brook trout they collect. Sampling will be done on Long, Ben Miller, Croucher, Gates, Millyard, and Albert Bridge Lakes. This sampling took place in June 2008. Results are unknown at this time.

Third Annual May Fair in the Park

The Trust held its Third Annual **May Fair in the Park** on Sunday, May 25 at Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park located in Lewis Lake. The Trust thanks the Department of Natural Resources for making the Park available to participants for the day. We also wish to thank DNR for donating one hundred and fifty red spruce seedlings, our provincial tree, to give to the children who attended the May Fair.

One of the highlights of the day was the appearance of the area fire truck, thanks to the staff of the Bay Road Fire Station. Families were treated to a lovely performance by the Celtica Highland Dancers as well as a complimentary BBQ, thanks to our friends at the Sobeys Tantallon store. The Halifax Regional Water Commission donated bottled water. Once again, the Trust's oldest member was present: Dr. Wilfrid Creighton, age 104. Dr. Creighton has attended all of the Trust's May Fair celebrations and we look forward to seeing him again next year.

Representatives of the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization, Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails, St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, the Trust, and the newly formed Chebucto Wilderness Coalition (CWC) were present with their colourful information tables, which added greatly to the festivities of the day. Over forty people signed a petition endorsing the establishment of a wilderness area on the public land encircled by Highway 103 and 333.

The May Fair is the Trust's way of thanking the community for its ongoing support of our work and to make others aware of the scope of its work of the Trust as well as the work of like-minded organizations.

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:

September 23rd
White's Lake Legion

November 20th
TBA

Everyone Welcome!

Western Region
Community Council
Meetings

July 28th

August 25th

September 22nd

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



Trust is Honoured by Community Partners

In recent weeks the Trust has received confirmation of funding from a number of community partners to print *A Walking Guide to the Old St. Margarets Bay Road*. We are pleased to acknowledge funding from Nicom IT Solutions, the Chebucto West Community Health Board, Halifax Regional Municipality, NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection and St. Margaret's Bay Regional Tourism Development Association .

We extend our deepest appreciation to all the community partners for their tremendous generosity and support of our project. It is our aim to produce a Walking Guide that will be used by a wide readership. We hope to awaken their curiosity about the history of the area as well as encourage the use of the public land. It is our hope that the Walking Guide will encourage the readers to explore the many wonderful attributes of the public lands adjacent to Old St. Margarets Bay Road. The Walking Guide will be made available free of charge to schools, libraries, tourism businesses and any who express an interest in obtaining a copy. We will also be posting it on our web site.

The final revisions will be made to the Walking Guide shortly with an anticipated publication in September and a celebratory Guide Launch in late September. Please check our website later in August for the date of the launch.

Editor -Tom Musial
tom.musial@ili.ca
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!

Sequel to Investigation of Fungal Substance Infiltration in the Stream at Goodwood

At the time of the posting of the April edition of the Bridge, members of the Trust and others were concerned about the length of response time by the requisite authorities from the time of the initial call on April 10 until a concerted response got underway to address the fungal substance in the stream in Goodwood.

Communications between community organizations and various government departments were numerous, mostly at the urging of the community organizations. Our frustration with the lack of response culminated in writing of our concerns, about response time of government departments and their follow-up communication with community, to the Nova Scotia Minister of Environment and the Regional Directors General for both Environment Canada (EC) and the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). On June 20 Environment Minister Parent responded to our earlier correspondence and provided an update on the activities among the three departments and HRM. The Minister noted that the co-operation between government authorities lead to the source of the nutrients that caused the fungal bloom in the stream, now known as Cotton Ball Creek. The source was determined to be a broken pipe in a sewage disposal pipe from an adjacent business. The pipe has now been repaired and as of June 5, 2008 the fungal growth has dissipated.

Minister Parent also responded to our request for a Round Table discussion between government departments and community groups on environmental response and public notification. The Trust was invited to contact a representative at Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) to set in motion the process of organizing such a forum. This contact has been made; staff at NSE will consult with members of DFO and EC. It is expected that a forum involving government departments and community groups will be established later this summer.

While we are pleased with the Minister's recognition for a Round Table discussion, we remain concerned that if the community organizations had not carefully monitored the situation, the resolution may never have occurred. We look forward to the Round Table discussion and hope that it will result in a better understanding of community concerns by government departments and the establishment of communication protocols between government departments and community members.

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

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