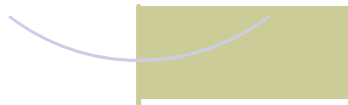


# The Bridge

**Chair**  
**Beth McGee**  
 jemcgee@eastlink.ca



## Message from the Chair

**September 2007**

***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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Friends,

Since its founding, the Trust has promoted a vision of community collaboration with government to plan for the management of public lands for sustainable public use on the Chebucto Peninsula. Following the September 2005 invitation from Peter Underwood, Deputy Minister at DNR, to help him develop a process to devise a plan for the above lands, registered community groups have expended considerable volunteer hours working jointly with provincial and municipal governments in a Working Group. We agreed to jointly develop procedures for planning and managing the public lands of the Chebucto Peninsula. Initially, it appeared as though everyone had the same goal, however over time the common vision appears to have become clouded on the part of the legal stewards of the land.

Many drafts of the proceedings of the Working Group called for a Stewardship Council supported by a Charter that include a statement of mission and scope, guiding principles, rights and responsibilities, a facilitator, operating ground rules, rules for conduct, procedures for sourcing information and expertise, guidelines for media relations, principles of confidentiality, procedures for expanding group membership, procedures for generating resources and a list of issues to be addressed. After a year of dedicated work we were beginning to sense true progress.

In February, a major turnaround occurred with DNR senior staff reporting that at this time and into the foreseeable future there is no intention to proceed with the formation of a Council. The current draft of the Chebucto Peninsula Stewardship Charter was stripped of all but a set of guiding principles.

On August 7th we met with Peter Underwood. While the Deputy Minister conveyed that he remains committed to the establishment of a plan for public land use on the Chebucto Peninsula, to date we have not seen any tangible evidence of how this commitment will materialize. It is indeed regrettable that we, and the other community members, have expended so much volunteer time and talent only to have the planning for the creation of the management plan placed in abeyance.

The proposed Chebucto Peninsula Stewardship Council is not about usurping the role of government, not about another form of governance and not about the community groups being in a power struggle with government. It is about mutual respect, jointly developed structure and process and coordinating the volunteer and government expertise in creating a long range management plan for the Chebucto Peninsula.

The Trust's and fellow community representatives vision of having a government-community developed structure and agreed upon operating procedures and process has reached a plateau and is now on hold.

The Trust now awaits government's response to its requests to address the impediments to completing the jointly agreed tasks. We would like to be able to complete the task of a community and government jointly developed long range management plan for the Chebucto Peninsula. The establishment of the Chebucto Peninsula Stewardship Council will provide an excellent vehicle for planning.

Fundamental to the Trust work is its ongoing commitment to working with government in a jointly developed structure relating to the planning for the public lands of the Chebucto Peninsula,

Beth McGee

## Lichen Brochure

### Board of Trustees

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( ) Years remaining on the Board

The Trust, in concert with the Gaia Singers, is pleased to announce the publication of a brochure detailing the lichens of the Bluff Trail located in Hubley, Nova Scotia. The field work and content was done Frances Anderson; the graphic art was done by Neil Atkinson. It is anticipated the brochure will be available for distribution by the end of October. At that time copies will be available by contacting Catherine King at 823-3433.



### Environment First ?

Recent actions by the two lower levels of government call into question their commitment of placing the environment first. At the municipal level we have witnessed two cases of questionable decisions being made that place individual interests above community interests. The decision to reduce parkland reserve not only limits the amount of parkland available to the public but also places an additional financial burden on the taxpayer and the decision to amend the development agreement to allow storm water to be pumped into the ditch of Highway 103. Both of these decisions fail to put the environment first.

The Department of Natural Resources continues to support clear cutting in game reserves and on public land in general. In addition, the department recently acquired sizeable tracts of land from Bow Water Paper above current fair market value. While the government is to be applauded for acquiring this land and its plans to afford it protection, the costs to the tax payer and the benefit to the corporate interest seems quite disproportionate. Once again it appears that corporate interest is being placed well above community interest. Corporate bailout under the guise of protecting the environment appears to be the guiding principle at work.

The theme of both levels of government appears to be the same; look after the few at the expense of the many. While both levels of government profess to put the environment first, it would be nice to see the actions mirror the words.

### Advisors to the Board

**Frank Hope**

**Gary Armsworthy**

**Ralph Wheadon**

**Carroll Mason**

**Jeff Parks**

**Bill Estabrooks**

**Wayne N. Rogers**

### Web Address

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

## Learn to Fish

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will be conducting a **Learn to Fish** program for young people, **eight to twelve years old**, at the Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park at Lewis Lake in **May 2008**. This program provides a young person with an opportunity to learn about the different types of fishing equipment, how and when to use them as well as an opportunity to catch a trout.

The program provides participants with several hours of classroom instruction followed by a number of hours on the water. All of the equipment is provided. Persons interested in participating in this activity should monitor the NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture web site **[www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/sportfishing](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/sportfishing)**.

## Council of Community Organizations

COCO continues to serve as a valuable vehicle for community groups to share and receive current information about activities that are in the planning or implementation stages. In addition, it is encouraging to see our elected officials beginning to regularly attend in order that they too can share in the information circle as well as hear the concerns of the various groups and communities of the Chebucto Peninsula.

The July COCO meeting was very well attended with a wide variety of issues being discussed. One of the matters that garnered considerable attention was the lack of progress relating to the establishment of the Chebucto Peninsula Stewardship Council. The Trust and other community organizations have been attempting to engage HRM and DNR in meaningful discussions to create a structured process for the development of a long range management plan for the Chebucto Peninsula. Regrettably to date, the response from DNR in particular has been less than enthusiastic. It appears, DNR is more interested in engaging in ad hoc projects than commit to a structured format that recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the legal stewards of public land and the registered community groups that have an interest in how public land will be used. While DNR profess they are interested in further discussion their actions, to date, have sent an entirely different message.

Other matters discussed included the decision by HRM Council to reduce the amount of parkland reserve: the lack of funding to maintain the Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails (BLTR2T); efforts by St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBA) to raise funds for the Micou's Island project; the work of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) to assist a developer in the planning of a subdivision to be located near the Terrence Bay Wilderness Area and an overview of the recently formed Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee. The Prospect Road Organization for a Better Environment (PROBE) and the Brookside Home Owners Association provided the assembly with an overview of their organizations. In addition, two planners from HRM were also in attendance and answered questions.

### **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 DOE&L, **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 20th**

**Lakeside Community Ctr.**

**November 22nd**

**Lakeside Community Ctr.**

**Everyone Welcome!**

### **Western Region Community Council Meetings**

**September 24th**

**October 22nd**

**November 26th**

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



### Editor

Wayne N. Rogers

wnrogers@eastlink.ca

### 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.

## Clear Cutting of Public Land

The policy of the Department of Natural Resources to allow clear cutting of public land is confusing at best. The Chignecto Game Sanctuary is a prime example of the hypocrisy of the practice. According to a spokesperson for the department, clear cutting enhances the wildlife population by providing new growth for the animals to browse. However, while there may be an element of truth in this approach; the off setting damage to the area significantly outweighs this small benefit. Raymond Plourde of the Ecological Action Group perhaps said it best when he stated that if clearing cutting truly enhanced the moose population then Nova Scotia would be overrun with moose.

Clear cutting is a practice that must be rethought; clear cutting of public land should be legislated out of existence.

## Parkland Reserve Under Attack

Recently, Halifax Regional Council entertained a proposal to amend the Regional Plan by reducing the amount of parkland reserve required by developers for the first three lots of a subdivision. This proposal is just another example of taking the Regional Plan apart one clause at a time. One must question why so many resources were wasted on the development of a Regional Plan when Council is prepared to disregard the work of so many .

In addition to the loss of public land, there is also a financial impact. HRM will encounter a shortfall in excess of **\$200,000.00 annually**; this amount must be made up by the taxpayer. It is indeed regrettable that a favored few seem to be able to circumvent the will of the majority through the Council process. Unfortunately, once again public land is under attack.

## Prospect River Watershed Water Testing Underway

A joint initiative between the Trust, the Prospect Road Organization for a Better Environment (PROBE), Saint Mary’s University and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and support from the Department of Environment and Labour has begun to take water samples from the Prospect River watershed. Samples have been taken at Ragged Lake, Otter Lake, Dick Lake, Big and Little Indian Lakes. The water samples will be analyzed to establish baseline data against which future testing can be measured. Proposed development at Exit 3 on Highway 103 has the potential to negatively impact the Prospect River and Nine Mile River watersheds. The loss of mayfly hatches on some lakes is an early warning sign that the Prospect River watershed may be undergoing negative changes that could impact the native trout population.

The water quality on the Chebucto Peninsula impacts all aspects of the lives of the residents as well as those who use the area for recreational purposes. Once a watershed is negatively impacted the cost of restoration will far exceed the cost of prevention. **Water is our most valuable resource, it deserves protection!**