



## Report #5 from the Steering Committee

January 30, 2009

CHEBUCTO WILDERNESS COALITION

### 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 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. Margaret's 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. Representatives of the ATV club, FBWHT, WRWEO, the BLT Rails to Trails Association, and the St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails Association all 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 trail 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 goodwill 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 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.