



Report from the Steering Committee

February 13, 2009

CHEBUCTO WILDERNESS COALITION

CWC Steering Committee meeting with Environmental Design and Management Ltd. regarding the Western Common, Wilderness Common Master Plan

Four members of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition (CWC) Steering Committee attended a meeting on January 28, 2009 with Margot Young and Trevor Hume of Environmental Design and Management Ltd. (EDM) at their office in Halifax. The meeting was held to discuss how CWC's proposal to have crown lands on the Chebucto Peninsula protected under the *Wilderness Areas protection Act* relates to the development of the Western Common, Wilderness Common Master Plan. In attendance representing the CWC Steering Committee were Beth McGee, Tom Musial, Mike Marriott and Alexi Baccardax.

The Western Common is an 8,000 acre parcel of land, owned by HRM. It is bounded by Highway 103 to the north, the Ragged Lake Business Park to the east, and Exit 3 on Highway 103 to the west. The southern portion of the site is bound by both the Prospect Road (Highway 333) from Ragged Lake to Hatchet Lake on one side, and Nine Mile River on the other.

The Wilderness Common is the entire western half of the Western Common as identified in a 1998 study by HRM planning staff and a community based steering committee called the Western Common Needs Assessment Committee. The study recommended a Master Plan for the Wilderness Common to be developed. The HRM Regional Plan classified this area as a regional park but also noted further requirement for analysis of the area before designating the area as such. EDM is undertaking this further analysis through the development of the Western Common, Wilderness Common Master Plan

EDM is currently in the process of addressing all of the various stakeholder needs to develop the most suitable plan. The CWC steering committee members came to the meeting with the message that the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition has a valid stake in the new plan because the western wilderness common borders a large portion of the crown land that the CWC wants to see protected.

One of the main messages conveyed to EDM by the CWC steering committee members was the desire for there to be connectivity for humans and wildlife between the various protected lands surrounding Halifax. The steering committee and its message was well received by EDM and future dialogue was agreed upon.