



WRWEO WATCH (Vol. 5, No. 1) May, 2008

Newsletter for the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization



Cranberry Lake, where the Pot Lake and Indian Hill Loops cross on The Bluff Trail

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Annual General Meeting On March 25 Raymond Plourde of Ecology Action Centre was the keynote speaker at our AGM. He spoke eloquently on the benefits and challenges of protecting public land under the Province of Nova Scotia Wilderness Areas Protection Act. Afterward the membership voted unanimously to seek protection of the public lands within the boundaries of Highways 103 and 333 in the Chebucto Peninsula under this act and to join a coalition of community groups for this purpose. The membership elected a full board of 15 members: Richmond Campbell (Chair), Barbara Klass (Secretary), and Brian Saulnier (Treasurer), Anne Alleyne, Marine Berry, Paul Berry, Rob Chambers, Halley Guest, Hildi Konok, Bill Matheson, Tim McGee, Natalie Leonard, Anna Naylor, and Terry Randell. Annual reports from the Chair, Treasurer, The Bluff Trail Committee, and the Water Quality Committee are available at www.wrweo.ca

Coalition for Wilderness Protection The Chebucto Peninsula Wilderness Coalition has now been formed. More than 30 organizations and persons have written endorsements, such as, 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 be permitted to use certain hard-packed corridors that would be excluded from the protected status of the woods 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 Regional Community Council (Councilors Steve Adams, Gary Meade, and Reg Rankin), Timberlea-Prospect MLA Bill Estabrooks, Halifax West MP Geoff Regan. Additional letters of support arrive daily. In the near future the former Deputy Minister of the N.S. Department of Lands and Forests (1949-69), Dr. Wilfrid Creighton, expects to present our 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.



Fishers participate in last year's fishing derby.

Annual Fishing Derby On Saturday June 7 WRWEO will sponsor again its annual fishing derby on Stillwater Pond on Hammonds Plains Road near Exit 5 of Highway 103. This is a time when fishers of all ages can fish without a license. WRWEO arranges for the pond to be well-stocked with fish and hands out prizes for various levels of accomplishment. We also try to educate those participating about the value of fish habitat and the necessity to respect and preserve it.

The occasion is also an opportunity for families to learn about and to join WRWEO.

International Trails Day and The Bluff Trail On Saturday June 7 hikers on The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail and the BLT Rails-to-Trails qualify to enjoy a hot dog at the Anglican Church on St. Margaret's Bay Road in celebration of International Trails Day. For those who haven't acquired one, maps of The Bluff Trail will be available from 9:30 am to 12 pm at the trailhead. A parking lot dedicated to hikers that is a five minute walk from The Bluff Trail trailhead may be found by going east for 2 km on the St. Margaret's Bay Road (at Exit 4 on Highway 103) to the Bay Self-Storage and turning right into the lot immediately afterward. WRWEO memberships (\$10) are available at the trailhead.

One of Eight Best in Canada In the May 2008 issue of Explore: Canada's Outdoor Magazine, The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail was named as one of the eight best "urban escapes" in Canada. Celebrate International Trails Day with us and hike The Bluff Trail.

May Fair in Jerry Lawrence Park On Sunday May 25 from 12 pm – 3 pm come and enjoy entertainment (Celtica Highland Dancers, Gaia Singers), fun games for children, free hot dogs, and exhibits of community volunteer organizations at the Jerry Lawrence (formerly Lewis Lake) provincial park on St. Margaret Bay Road. WRWEO will have a booth there as will the new Chebucto Peninsula Wilderness Coalition. This is a popular family oriented event hosted by Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust.

PCB Contamination in Fish from Five Island Lake As many of you know, in 1994 after a leakage of transformer fluid containing PCBs into the North Bay of Five Island Lake, the Province collaborated with citizens in the area to establish a liaison group to work with the government in developing and carrying out a remediation procedure. The Five Island Lake Community Liaison Committee (CLC) began then and WRWEO has had representation there since 1995. The Province working with CLC began to clean up the contaminated area around the bay and dredged the Bay itself. The remediation took place over a period of 10 years. Although PCBs are not water soluble, once they are in the silt at the bottom of a lake, they work their way up the food chain and are eventually found in the fatty tissue of fish and loons that eat the fish. For this reason consumers of these fish should exercise caution and limit their consumption (for guidelines see the Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish, 2007-8 edition). There is currently a catch-and-release policy for fishing on Five Island Lake and a number of other lakes, such as Frederick, Sheldrake, and Birch Hill as well as downstream in Woodens River. Testing of fish has been done in 1994, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007. The most recent tests show unacceptable levels of PCBs remain in the fish in Five Island Lake. At a public meeting on May 7 at the Tantallon Public Library hosted by FBWHT with representation from the NS Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (NSDTIR) and the NS Department of Inland Fisheries (NSDIF) the issues around health and fish stock management were discussed. A number of anglers from the lower watershed who fish the Woodens River maintained that the trout are plentiful and argued that the catch-and-release policy should be lifted. Other anglers opposed lifting the ban for conservation reasons. A proposal was made by some persons attending the meeting to test fish in the Woodens River and lower lakes. NSDTIR and NSDIF said that they would take this suggestion and others made at the meeting under consideration. To read the 14 newsletters on the clean up, google 'Five Island Lake' and click on 'Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal', then click on 'Community Liaison Committee' and 'Newsletter'.

Sheldrake Lake Aeration Project A number of residents at Sheldrake Lake met with members of WRWEO on April 9 and agreed to assist in the aeration project described in previous newsletters. At least a dozen persons offered to help in the twice a month testing of relevant parameters, such as dissolved oxygen, as is required by our permit from NSDoE. Their enthusiasm for the project has been heartening and we are especially indebted to Dale Conrad and Danny LeBlanc, who arranged the meeting. We have now been able to calibrate our testing instrument with the help of Anna Naylor, a new board member who has experience as a student working with water quality measurements, and we are now ready to begin training the residents for carrying out the testing this summer.

WRWEO Membership Drive Each year about 40 – 50 people attend the AGM and renew their membership in WRWEO or become new members, but there has been little effort to seek out those who could not attend the AGM or those who would be interested in joining. It is possible to become a member by signing on through www.wrweo.ca using "Pay-Pal" or sending a check for \$10 made out to WRWEO to the address given below. If you know people who would be interested in supporting our work by becoming members, please encourage them to contact us. Anyone can contact us through the website or by writing to Richmond Campbell at Richmond.Campbell@dal.ca or phoning him at 489-0457.

To Contact WRWEO: Go to the website www.wrweo.ca and click on "contact us". You can also call Richmond Campbell (Chair) at 876-7847 (home) or 489-0457 (cell) or write to WRWEO, Unit 14, Box 300, 3650 Hammonds Plains Road, Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia B3Z 4R3.