



THE BLUE HERON

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

P.O. Box 158, Baddeck, Nova Scotia B0E 1B0

15th Anniversary...30 plus 1 Editions!

VOLUME 15

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NO. II

After creating, organizing, producing and editing 30 editions (1998-2012) of the Blue Heron (BH), Henry Fuller has decided it is time to pass on this responsibility. This does not mean he is disappearing from the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society (BSS) scene; far from it. In fact he has an article in this issue. Under his watchful eye the BH has provided an interesting record of life in and around the Bras d'Or Lakes (BOL) since the first issue appeared 15 years ago.

Henry arrived in Cape Breton 39 years ago. To use an eighteenth century term he is 'a man of parts' from a long line of people of the same kind. He has owned and run the Cape Breton Boat Yard for 36 years. He oversees and manages a family cattle farm in Missouri. He was a founding member of the BSS and still its very effective treasurer. He

is an even longer standing member and past chairman of the Board of the Northside Economic Development Corporation (NEDAC 1992-2012), a director of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT 1998-2102) and of the Baddeck Harbour Authority 2011-2012. Other Boards on which he has served include that of the Gaelic College, the Baddeck Area Business and Tourist Association (BABTA) and the Bras d'Or Yacht Club.

Henry is one of the CFAs (come-from-aways) who arrived in CB during the 1970s, many of whom made significant contributions to Cape Breton life. Among them two, Elizabeth May and Ron Caplan received the Order of Canada.

To move on. Apart from Henry's article mentioned above and some news items one of which is a report by Leah Noble of the results of the BSS promoted school art competition, this issue contains a number of others of interest. Mabel MacEachern, gives an upbeat, account of our April 28th AGM. There are companion articles on commercial fisheries by Jim Crawford (see insert). Rosemary Burns provides a personal example of what can and has gone wrong in one place along the shores of the BOL. Jared Tomie gives a brief account of the life cycle of the eel. David Gunn provides a piece of local Bras d'Or Lakes history focusing on the Crammond Islands.

Jim Foulds provides an update on the Bras d'Or Biosphere Reserve Association (BLBRA).

James V. O'Brien

NOTICE

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL
SUMMER MEETING OF THE
SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON
SATURDAY,
AUGUST 11, 2012
AT 10:00 A.M.
MASONIC HALL
BADDECK
ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED
TO ATTEND AS WELL AS
INTERESTED CITIZENS WHO
ARE CONCERNED WITH THE
FUTURE STEWARDSHIP OF
THE BRAS D'OR LAKES.**

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"Our goal
is to
protect,
conserve
and
restore the
Bras d'Or
Lakes"



NEWS ITEMS:

BRAS D'OR CREATIVITY CONTEST

The results of the "Celebrate the Bras d'Or 2012 Creativity Contest" open to all students in CB public schools and home schooled from Primary to Grade 12, organized by Leah Noble and Jared Tomie of the BSS and Emily Donald of the BLBRA are as follows. Entries were received from Grade Primary to Grade 10. The judges were photographer Carol Kennedy of North River, painter Virginia McCoy of Inverness, bookbinder and paper artist Katherine Scott of Gabarus and water colour painter of Kenny Boone Dominion. There were 250 entries.

Winners (W) and Honourable Mention (HM) for all levels are as follows;

Primary W Beth MacInnis, Brookland Elementary HM Gillian Bungay, Brookland Elementary

Grade 1 W - Marcos Ale Tun-MacNeil, Brookland Elementary. HM - Maria Georghiou, Brookland Elementary

Grade 2 W - Annabelle Gould, Eskasoni HM - Carlos Dennis, Eskasoni

Grade 3 W - Morgan MacInnis, Rankin. HM- Connor MacInnis, Rankin

Grade 4 W - Naomi Yonder, Baddeck Elementary HM - Mac McCraff, Sydney Elementary

Grade 5 W- Fiona MacLellan, Sydney River. HM - Megan McMullin, Sydney River

Grade 6 W - Victoria Brogan, Jubilee. HM- Liam Boone, Coxheath Elementary

Grade 7 W Emerson Cabot, Rankin. HM - John Malkowicz, Rankin

Grade 8 W - Robert Messem, Baddeck HM - Erica Anderson, Baddeck

Grade 9 W - Sean Freeborne, Rankin. HMs - Lindsey MacNeil, Rankin and Alex Bonaparte, Rankin

Grade 10 W - Avery Matheson, Rankin HM- Alyssa MacNeil, Rankin

The artwork is displayed online at <https://www.facebook.com/BrasDorStewardshipSociety>.

CRUISING CLUB OF AMERICA (CAA)

To celebrate the foundation of the CCA here in Baddeck 90 years ago, in late July up to 60 members plan to sail to Baddeck to celebrate the event in July. They also intend to sail to other places such as MacAskill's (Bouleceet) Harbour, Big Harbour and Louisbourg.

REMOVAL OF FISHERY OFFICERS.

The Harper government's (Tea Party not so light of the north) C-38 omnibus budget bill contains 100 pages of new environmental regulation provisions, most of which seem aimed at diluting regulatory enforcement capacity for the convenience of big business. Consistent with this policy that the two person DFO conservation and protection offices in Baddeck and Port Hood will be closed and 'consolidated' in Sydney.. Former fisherman and Victoria County councillor Merrill MacInnis describes the changes as 'a major loss'. Trevor MacInnis President of the Inverness South Fishermen's Association likewise expresses such reservations.

BEN EOIN MARINA DEVELOPMENT

This proceeds apace. Several Society members attended a recent well-attended public meeting concerning the above. Pat Bates pointed out despite being contrary provincial regulations, a wetland area will be at least markedly changed. Henry Fuller mentioned the absence of a business plan. Others also expressed doubts about the development. Despite this it was clear the large majority supported the development.

MACKINNON'S HARBOUR SURVIVAL ASSOCIATION (MHSA)

The MHSA remains alive and active in its role as stewards of that quite striking part of the BOL. Chairman Charlie MacDonald reports the entrance is kept open and the water in the harbour circulating. Two eagle's nests are active. A portion of the adjacent land is being considered for land conservation by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. The MKHS would be more than pleased to get new members the chairman says.

DRILLING NEAR LAKE AINSLIE

Earlier this year the 'Protect Lake Ainslie Group' made a well researched presentation to the board of the Society concerning a proposed plan to drill for oil and gas some 600 m from the shore of Lake Ainslie using 'fracking', a process is still under a great deal of scrutiny.

BSS AGM Another Great Meeting

By Mabel MacEachern

“Whoever invented the meeting must have had Hollywood in mind. I think they should consider giving an Oscar for the meetings; Best meeting of the year; Best supported meeting of the year, Best meeting based on material.”

- William Goldman

I will vote the Bras d’ Or Stewardship Society for having the best Annual General Meeting (AGM) based on members, material and, of course, the tea and treats – this is Cape Breton after all.

Often when people think of attending an AGM, they can’t imagine giving up a few hours on a beautiful Saturday morning. It’s a different story at the society as board members, interested Society members and the community at large always support the work of the Bras d’ Or Stewardship. At the Society’s meetings there is always something new to learn, people to meet and community connections to be made. Even though the meetings are engaging, our AGMs never run on too long, as our chair keeps business focussed.

On Saturday, April 28th, we were treated to not one but two presentations. While the subjects were quite different, they were as enlightening. Mary Tulle, CEO of Destination Cape Breton, spoke to us about marketing Cape Breton as 2012’s number one island in North America. It was inspiring to hear and experience the enthusiasm Ms Tulle has for her job. She informed us over one million people voted for our beautiful island in the online survey that brought us to #1. How can we not be proud as Cape Bretoners?

The second presentation was

given by Jared Tomie. Jared recently completed his master’s degree on the American Eel. This very interesting well organized presentation fully engaged the attention of the audience. (See Jared’s article in this issue).

As usual this year’s AGM was a friendly, informative meeting where experts, enthusiasts and interested folks gathered. Though a year away, you might consider coming to the next AGM. There will always be tea, coffee, muffins and scones plus one or more informative presentations, good chats with like-minded people, all interested in preserving the health of the Bras d’ Or Lake. Having our island voted number one is good reason for us to soar with the eagles.

The Bras d’Or Stewardship Society is interested in contributions from our members. If you have something to contribute to the Newsletter or would like to work with the society’s board, please let us know. The society is an all volunteer organization that welcomes input from individuals interested in promoting the conservation, protection and restoration of the Bras d’Or Lakes and its watershed.

Taking Care of The Bras d’Or Lakes: Looking Back 15 Years

By Henry W. Fuller

History:

It is now been 15 years since the Bras d’Or Stewardship Society was formed in August 1997 by a group of concerned individuals who realized the need for an organization to champion the future stewardship of the Bras d’Or Lakes at a local ‘grass roots’ level. The impetus for forming the Society evolved from a quietly shelved document entitled “Taking Care of the Bras d’Or” which was a report that evolved from a series of meetings held in 1995 to discuss the future stewardship of the Bras d’Or Lakes. Rod Carrow, a forestry expert from Guelph University, chaired this initiative that included a group of concerned individuals who met regularly at Cape Breton University to create a meaningful and serious document that called for action.

Once the document was finalized it was presented to various federal and provincial government departments where it received minimal attention until a meeting was called by local individuals to find out why no action had been taken! At the time Nova Scotia’s Natural Resource Minister, Wayne Adams, was not ready to support the reports recommendations.

Current Existing Groups:

Fortunately, today there are several groups since 1995 that have focused their work on the Bras d’Or Lakes. They are the Bras d’Or Stewardship Society, the Bras d’Or Lakes Biosphere Society, the Collaborative Economic Planning Initiative and the Bras d’Or Preservation Trust.

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These groups have worked within their own frameworks to promote and protect the Bras d'Or Lakes and its water shed. Some have fostered partnerships between various levels of government and the First Nation's community as hopeful cooperative endeavors.

Each group has its own measured success in achieving its goals. These groups have their own board of directors and sources of funding. Some organizations have been heavily subsidized by government while others have sought support from the private sector or a combination of private and government funding.

Loss of Government Support:

Currently, with announced federal and provincial government as presented in the omnibus bill C-38 cut backs in funding, the survival of organizations that depended primarily on government monies is in jeopardy. Without the funds, then, the organizations can not provide the leadership to carry on their mandate i.e. the objectives set forth in their articles of incorporation. Hence, once funding support disappears, the organizations die a slow (or rapid) death as the case maybe that saps the strength and the capability to follow their particular mandates. A recent piece in the *Globe and Mail* (May 21, 2012) focused on announced cutbacks and the job losses at Parks Canada. Many of those who will lose their jobs are scientists employed to protect "environmental integrity" so states the article.

Economy Trumps Environment:

Recent announced pending changes to the current Canadian federal government's environmental policies and regulations will effectively eviscerate once deemed important legislation put in place to provide safe guards through long

standing environmental assessment policies. The rationale given is that historical policies are (were) costly, full of red tape and slowed down industrial development projects. The goal is to streamline the application process and cut out public input leaving the government of the day to make crucial decisions. This is both dangerous and undemocratic further establishing the overall control by government in determining what is allowable and what is not.

The bottom line here is that the economics trumps environmental issues (reference recent Ralph Surette editorial on salmon farming in Nova Scotia). There is nothing new in this, but now the general public comes to have minimal input when establishing environmental rules and regulations i.e. the right to defend and contest environmental policies.

Disenfranchisement:

In social, economic, political domains when people are disregarded, the evolving sentiments focus on personal disenfranchisement. Today, we are experiencing disenfranchisement on a global scale from as witnessed by the high level of protests on many global fronts. Today, communication technology is such that once the disenfranchised cat is out of the bag, the knowledge flows quickly and poignantly to any and all interest groups. Today, the grounds for the awareness of social occupation and insurrection flow rapidly through social networking channels that are cheap and very effective. There is nothing worse then to feel disenfranchised from the social, economic and political domains especially when environmental concerns are dismissed for political and economic reasons.

The Rub:

You may ask what my point is. My point is that it will become all the more important for local groups to

organize and voice their opinions. By not providing government funding for organizations that make it possible for individuals to participate in partnership with municipal, provincial and federal agencies public input is emasculated. We have seen time and time again where (voluntary planning) commissions are set up for public input only to realize in the end that the public opinions are disregarded. The process is one of 'loose lip' service to project the image of validating public consultation. This is not good enough given that the environment is often sacrificed for political and economic ends. We have experienced this in the impending destruction of a coastal wetland as the development of the Ben Eoin marina proceeds. Thus project is a finite example of "the politics of place!"

The historical work must continue to protect the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed by dedicated individuals and the organizations they represent. New models of organized cooperation may well be required as government funding cuts under omnibus bill C-38 take their toll!

*From My
Window 1977-2012*

Rosemary Burns

When we arrived in St. George's Channel in 1977 the road was unpaved, power lines ran through the woods and fields behind houses, there weren't any street lights, the Bras d'Or Lakes were crystal clear and boasted magnificent hues of blue and it froze solid every winter. I really laughed when the neighbours told me that as I couldn't imagine such an expanse of salty water freezing as I was accustomed to the Atlantic Ocean.

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This blanket of ice suppressed mighty wave action whipped up by howling winter winds and thus helped to protect the shore line for several months of the year.

Slowly this began to change and for the past seven years there is little but slush ice in the St. George's Channel area of the Bras d'Or Lakes during the winter. No more skiing or crossing to Widow Point (Inverness County) via the ice.

I have watched as the beautiful tree line on our beach (a popular eagle's perch) eroded from the year round wave action. Root systems weakened, the severe winds have upended all but two of twenty five trees.

While I lament the loss of my trees neighbouring property owners purposely hew their trees for the view.

Shades of blue have changed to shades of brown as construction of homes and roads , highway upgrades and shoreline erosion has created sediments which flow into the Bras d'Or Lakes.

We cannot control "Nature" but we can control the indiscriminate removal of trees near the shoreline via Zoning and Land Use By-Laws.

Reports, studies and recommendations are not of much use if left to the discretion of the individual. Regulations empowered with enforcement and consequences would surely bring about some change and help to stop further deterioration of the shoreline of this magnificent body of water, The Bras d'Or Lakes.

The Crammond Islands

David Gunn

The following story is based on the recollections of Johanna

MacKenzie who grew up on the above islands and currently lives in West Bay. She is the daughter of John Hector and Sadie MacLean. She was the second of fourteen children.

The Bras d'Or Lake has many islands – there was a time before railroads or autos when the Lake served as a transportation corridor. It is not surprising that some of the larger islands were chosen as places to settle.

In the West Bay of the Lake, there is a group of three islands. Referred to as the Crammond Islands on British Admiralty charts from the 1850s, these islands were inhabited.

Locally the islands are known by the names of the families who settled or lived there, Smith Island is the western-most island. MacLean Island is the centre island. Floda, the eastern-most island was never permanently settled. Smith and MacLean Islands both supported farms – and each had a substantial home and out-buildings.

Smith and MacLean Islands were both originally settled by the Smith family. Around the time of the First World War, two Smith brothers headed families who lived on the islands. Archie Smith's family was on the MacLean Island; Dan Smith farmed Smith Island.

Archie Smith on MacLean Island had eight girls and no boys. Dan Smith was also blessed with two girls. There was a school-house on MacLean Island – Jim Smith, Dan's brother lived on Smith Island – he would ultimately become the last resident of the islands.

Some time after the First World War, Archie Smith's widow decided to sell what would become MacLean Island - one can imagine that a family of eight girls and no boys made operating a large farm difficult.

John Hector MacLean lived in Sydney where he had a job in the

steel mill. His future wife, Sadie Bell Gillis, worked in Boston. John's parents lived in West Bay in a home which is currently occupied by their grand-daughter. The grand-father "the tanner" ran a tannery.

John Hector MacLean and Sadie Bell fell in love and were married. John paid \$1000 for the island a considerable sum in those days. However he had bought a large fully equipped farm. The house on MacLean Island was substantial: it had three fireplaces – it was post and beam construction and overlooked the Lake, facing south. There was a dug well near the house – plus there was a well in the basement used for cooling milk cream and other items.

Heat was generally softwood as there was little hardwood on the island. There was a kitchen stove, a Perfection; WARM MORNING were used to heat other areas. Hardwood was brought to the island, generally using sleds on the ice.

There was a large hay barn with a pitching machine, a two-horse mower, a rake, a harrow, plows and a milk separator – this was a substantial farm. Livestock included horses, cows, sheep, chickens dogs and cats.

After John bought the property, the former school-house was used as an out-building and the school was moved into the house. The living-room was converted into a class-room.

John ultimately had 14 children. Mrs. MacLean went to Whycocomagh to give birth – she would go to West Bay Road and catch the train for Orangedale, then on to Whycocomagh.

Mail came to Morrison's Beach on MacKenzie Point where there was a post office. In good weather mail was collected twice a week.

For transportation, John had a larger boat equipped with a gasoline engine. This, however, was only used by John. The children used row boats to go for the mail or to West Bay. For winter travel, John had a two-seat sleigh which could be used on the ice.

Spring and fall were the most difficult times for travel. Trips by boat in the spring break-up risked getting pushed off-course by drift-ice. Johanna MacKenzie remembers being pushed well past the island by ice on a trip from West Bay back to the island. Fog was also a threat in the spring; it was possible to row right past the island into the open Lake in pea-soup conditions. John's power-boat was used for fishing. Cod and herring were staples for the family.

The farm raised potatoes, turnip, cabbage and carrots. There was no orchard so apples came from the shore. Floda provided lots of wild raspberries – pails-full. However, there were no blueberries on the island, so trips were made ashore during the season. Generally, Johanna remembers the islands' soil as unremarkable.

The farm was nearly self-sufficient, but trips were made to West Bay for tea, sugar, molasses, flour, pipe tobacco, and kerosene which was used for light and supplemented the candles made on the island – Johanna remembers carrying 2-gallon cans of kerosene on the ice – she also remembers making candles.

Social life was quite active, particularly during the good travel season, winter and summer. For a time there was even a hermit on Floda, Neamion MacKenzie (no relation) would come for a visit. Skating parties and card-playing were common.

The children had to leave the island for high-school. Johanna left for

high school in the 1930s.

By the early 1940s, the entire MacLean family had left the island – John and his wife moved to a home perched on North Mountain over-looking the lake and the island. By 1960 most buildings on Smith and MacLean islands were in ruins – only the MacLean house was still recognizable, but it was near collapse.

One person remained full-time on the islands – Jim Smith, a hermit, known locally as Jim Crow. He would come ashore for supplies or to sell fish. He lived in a shack on Smith Island in pretty grim conditions – in cold spells in the winter, people would watch for smoke from his stove to see if he was all right. Ultimately Jim left the island and for a while he lived with Dan Smith's widow in Whyccomagh. He later moved to Cameron's Rest Home on South Mountain overlooking his former home. He passed away at Cameron's. When he left the islands, an era came to an end.



Eel Odyssey

By Jared Tomie

The American eel, a local resident of the Bras d'Or Lakes, is a world class traveler and 'Jack of all trades', whose life is surrounded by mystery. American eels begin their lives in an undisclosed location in the Sargasso Sea – the exact location of the spawning ground is not currently known. No one has ever witnessed eels spawning in the Sargasso, nor has anyone been able to collect eel eggs from their natural breeding ground. Our current knowledge is based on eel larvae – the smallest of which are found in the Sargasso. These tiny larvae, only millimetres long, have a

transparent body which resembles the shape of a willow leaf. The larvae are carried away from the Sargasso Sea by ocean currents.

By hitching a ride on the currents, eels are able to travel great distances in many directions. The effectiveness of this dispersal is reflected in their geographic range. American eels can be found in the northern reaches of South America, all along the eastern seaboard, right up to the southern tip of Greenland. As the eel larvae approach the coast they go through a transformation. It is at this time, about one year after leaving the Sargasso (in our neck of the woods), that they adopt the typical eel shape. This is when they transition from being oceanic travelers, to coastal recluses.

Upon arrival in our coastal and inland waters, these small eels, now several centimetres in length, are still transparent. Some travel up rivers and streams, while others remain in estuaries and coastal saltwater areas. This is a key feature of the American eel – the ability to live in both fresh and saltwater. As the eels gain pigmentation, they change their name to elvers, and eventually, when they are around 10 cm long, are called yellow eels.

The yellow eel phase is what you commonly think an eel would look like; a serpentine fish, with impeccable mucous production, and a greasy flavour. This phase is also when they take growth spurts. By this time in their lives they are getting things down to a routine: spend the summers looking for food at night and relax in debris or sediment during the day. When the winter comes, they hunker down in burrows, passing time like a coach potato. This summer-winter routine continues year after year. Eels living in freshwater may continue this lifestyle of active summer

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feeding and lazy winters for more than 20 years – a stark difference from those who live in saltwater and grow up in only 5 years!

Eventually there comes a point when they feel the urge to return to the sea and enter their final stage of development – the silver eel phase. Their bodies change in preparation for a final, incredible journey. The ocean journey requires upgrades such as larger fins for improved swimming, added fat (eels don't eat on this journey), and larger eyes to see in the dark. The silver eel is also sexually mature. After a voyage of over 5000 kilometres, some of these silver eels reach their destination, and the whole process repeats itself. Given the scope of this epic journey, it truly is amazing that we have American eels in our waters at all!

Old Photos Wanted

Lynn Baechler

Sea level is rising. We know that some 6,000 years ago natural sea level rose high enough to allow the sea to flood in and create the Bras d'Or Lakes as we know them today. Fred and Lynn Baechler have been interested in documenting these changes, noting submerged peat deposits, drowned forests and flooding and/or migrating barrier beaches.

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society would like to support their work by asking our members to look at their old photographs for any pictures showing the Bras d'Or shoreline in the background. This would allow for a comparison with present shoreline and land use conditions (fields, forests, and infrastructure such as roads, trails, rail corridor

and buildings). Also any early mapping, land surveys and family stories would be appreciated.

This information could provide evidence of the extent and the impact of rising water levels. If you know of such documentation, please let us know: (902) 564-9303 or lynn.baechler@ns.sympatico.ca and we will take responsibility for getting them scanned and returned to you. We appreciate your interest and help in this endeavour.

Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere – Update Summer 2012

The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve is now one year old! As Canada's 16th Biosphere Reserve designation, we have joined a national and international network of people and places that promote sustainable development around the world. We have made great progress getting ourselves organized as a working group and starting to implement programs to help the watershed. The highlights of the last year have to start with the Celebration Weekend – last September 17-18th, 2011. Over 2400 people participated in one activity or another during the weekend and over 600 attended the ceremonial concert at the Highland Village Museum in Iona. You can check out some great videos from the event on our YouTube Channel (BLBiosphere).

We have 2 main projects on the go:

1. An inventory of groups around the watershed that work at one or more of the 3 functions of a Biosphere site. We are hiring a part-time contract person to help with this work!
2. Curriculum development using

the Bras d'Or to teach about "habitat" in grade 4 science. There is a group, working with the Dept. Of Education to help teach more about the Bras d'Or through a study of habitats in the elementary science curriculum.

Strategic Planning for the biosphere is also on the agenda. We have received funding from ECBC to conduct a Strategic Planning exercise to affirm our direction and how we will achieve our goals! We will be doing this in the Fall of 2012 and will involve our partners in this exercise!

Another milestone this past year was the development of our official logo. Wendy Burns Morrison of Baddeck did this for us and we couldn't be happier. The logo shows the blue of the water, the green of the land, and a circle representing the head of a person. We are left with a positive, uplifting image showing "man" and the biosphere as one - in harmony – working together sustainably! Thanks Wendy!

This was also the 2nd year for the creativity contest we co-sponsor with the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society. Thanks to volunteers: Leah Noble, Emily MacDonald and Jared Tomie, over 250 school children submitted a creative piece related to "We Share the Lake". This is a great way to promote stewardship of the watershed by the next generation! Plans are underway to make this happen in 2013!

A Biosphere Reserve display has been added to the Preservation Nature Trust

display at the Watershed Interpretive Center in the old post office in Baddeck. Many thanks to the BPNT and especially – Jessica Kleinherenbrink and Anna McCrory!

Jim Foulds, Chair, BLBRA

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

Addresses and telephone numbers of the Board of Directors

(902) 845-2189

Pat Bates,
Chairman

27 Wyndale Crescent
Sydney, N.S.
B1S 3L4
(902) 567-0827

Henry W. Fuller,
Treasurer

RR#2 #1065 Big Harbour
Baddeck, N.S.
B0E 1B0
(902) 295-2664

David L. Gunn

2792 RR#2
West Bay, N.S.
B0E 3K0
(902) 345-2263

Stephen Sober

RR #2
River Denys, N.S.
B0E 2Y0
(902) 756-2390

Rosemary Burns,
Vice Chair

3042 West Bay Highway
St. George's Channel
RR #2 West Bay, N.S.
B0E 3K0
(902) 345-2896

Dr. James V. O'Brien

RR#2 #1180 Big Harbour
Baddeck, N.S.
B0E 1B0
(902) 295-2344

Leah Noble

32 Long Hill Road
RR#2
Baddeck, NS B0E 1B0
(902) 295-1059

James M. Crawford

P.O. Box 277
Whycocomagh, N.S.
B0E 3M0
(902) 756-3556

Lynn Baechler,
Secretary

92 Crestdale Drive
Sydney, N.S.
B1L 1A1
(902) 564-9303

Timothy Lambert, Ph.D.

Lower Ship Harbour
RR#1,
Lake Charlotte #752
Nova Scotia
B0J 1Y0

Walter MacNeil

41 Grove St.
Sydney, N.S.
B1P 3M7
(902) 562-5434

James Foulds, Ph.D.

6025 Kempt Head Rd.
Boularderie, NS
B0C 1B0
(902) 674-2578

Mabel MacEachern

93 Rigby Street
Sydney, NS B1P 4T5
(902) 562-6138

Jared Tomie

25 Green Meadows Drive
Sydney, NS B1L 1C7
902-574-3816

Bras d'Or Watch
to report any observed acts, incidents and violations
that threaten the integrity of Bras d'Or Lakes please call:
1 800 565 1633

Our Email: www.brasdorstewardshipsociety.org

2012

BRAS D'OR STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------|--|
| MEMBER | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am in favour of conserving and restoring the
Bras d'Or Lake and watershed through
responsible stewardship. |
| FAMILY | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$25.00 | |
| CONTRIBUTOR | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$50.00 | |
| SUPPORTER | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$100.00 | Name _____ |
| LIFETIME MEMBER | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$500.00 | Address _____ |

*Mail check or money order along with your name
and address to:*

Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

P.O. Box 158

Baddeck, Nova Scotia, B0E 1B0

Phone _____

e-mail _____

Fax _____

Two Fisheries

By Jim Crawford

(These two articles derive from Jim Crawford's long experience as a commercial fisherman. Though referring to different fisheries, one with no direct relationship to the BOL, both are included as Department of Fisheries (DFO) regulations and regulators are central to both. The first outlines a project to recreate an oyster fishery in the BOLs. This depends on introducing a different strain of oysters and that probably will not be allowed by Department of Fisheries (DFO) regulators. The second concerns a swordfishery already changed by DFO regulators. Editor's note)

1. Oysters. Proposed Pilot Project

This is the outline of a pilot project to ascertain whether or not oysters can be grown to market size in the BOL before they become infested with MSX or Malpeque disease. The need is to aggressively grow-out oysters before time takes its toll. The basic concept is to be taken from the ongoing aquaculture practices that are being used in the North-East and Mid-Atlantic States. Examples of grow-out times for the production of a 3 inch marketable oyster in these States are as follows, Eastern Long Island a 3 inch oyster in 18 months, Martha's Vineyard Mass, 24 months. In the BOL the normal grow-out time is about 7 years

The design of such a project is as follows:-

1. Purchase a certified disease free triploid (c.virginia) seed 1.5mm to 2 mm from existing hatcheries in the US. Note this

is an MSX resistant strain.

2. Seed to be placed in floating upwellers (a process that greatly enriches oyster food supply) as soon as the water reaches 5.0 C a temperature reached in the BOL by early May. The site selected for the placement of upwellers should be in an area that traditionally has produced oysters in a shorter time frame than elsewhere in the BOL, such as the area around the Gillis Cove Oyster Station.

3. At 12 months the seed from the upwellers will then be placed in a floating or off-bottom grow out system. There they will grow to 3 inch market size. The targeted total grow-out time is 27 months. This grow-out time is reasonable given these oysters will be triploid whereas the Long Island and Martha's Vineyard are diploid.

Benefits from this grow-out strategy:

1. Less time to market.
2. Involves growers immediately.

3. A basic concept with a proven method of oyster aquaculture with science and a history behind it.

Also worth noting, the Cornell University Extension Group will assist and mentor the project. They are most aligned with the concept to get industry, community and governments together.

The idea of this collaboration is to follow a system that works and not try to re-invent in the wheel.

Swordfishery

Swordfish!!! A loud report comes from the top of the spar. Instantly the striker makes his way to the end of the pulpit. As the boat wheels around for its approach on the fish, the striker takes the harpoon in hand and studies the water. There before him is the fish, underwater, a beautiful blue, coming head to head. Now half a boat away at 12 o'clock, he draws the pole and focuses on his target. Instantly the fish

and striker come together. The harpoon is driven into the deep. The pole stops. The lily goes down through the fish. And he settles with the buoy line attached. In an hour's time this harpooned swordfish's end will come, in the cold dark waters 100 fathoms deep.

Since the 1880s this fishery has remained the same. One man-one fish-one arrow. Purely selective. Our fathers and grandfathers hunted and harpooned the swordfish exactly as we do today. A sustainable fishery for generations. The annual reports of the Department of Marine and Fishery from 1909-1959 show average yearly landings of harpoon swordfish at 856 metric tonnes for five decades.

Then came along the longline: 40 miles of longline with a hook every 10 fathoms. Fished at night while the crew slept. Catching anything that would take the bait: sharks, swordfish, tuna, turtles and marlins to name a few. In 1963 over 7,400 metric tonnes of swordfish were killed by the longliners.

Not unlike the destruction of the Newfoundland cod fishery, the large fish disappeared and the average landed weight was below 100 lb. dressed.

At this time in history the harpoon swordfishery was being destroyed, less than 50 metric tonnes a year from 1964 through the 1990s. For five decades we had a sustainable selective fishery. Two years after the longliners started in 1961, the harpoon swordfishery was nearly gone.

The industrialized longliner method of fishing for swordfish was so effective that the boom soon went to a bust. We the harpoon swordfishmen lost our fishery, not because of our methods or management but because of the indiscriminate killing by the longliners.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) said we had little or no "history" of harvest. We had no current history because the longliners nearly wiped out the stocks. We had "tons" of history before the longliners started dumping their hooks. Then came the DFO Swordfish Management Plan. A senior DFO resource manager and all the money the longliners lobby could hire conspired against the rightful caretakers of the fishery. A 90% quota was given to the longline industry, decided in a stairwell by one senior DFO manager during a heated argument – hardly a fair or democratic way to make such

an important decision.

The small coastal communities along the shores of Nova Scotia have suffered dearly from this mismanagement. The harpoon swordfishermen have had their summers' work stolen from them. The longliners have thrived. The swordfish they take allows them to target their primary catch – tunas: albacore, bigeye, bluefin, and maui maui – to top off their holds.

Also of note, the longliners through their well-connected lobbyist were allowed not only to longline for swordfish but also to longline and drail for tunas and harpoon swordfish. An interest note on the harpooning of swordfish by longliners is that they allow the use of spotter planes to find fish. We, the harpoon swordfishery outlawed the use of aircraft in the name of conservation.

It is well past the time for the swordfish management plan to be reviewed. Perhaps before an impartial judge from Saskatchewan. A proper and rightful decision and reallocation of quota to the harpoon swordfishery would be forthcoming.