



# THE BLUE HERON

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

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

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NO. 2

Several issues have been brought to the Society's attention since January 2005. One curiously interesting criticism that has been recently directed to the Society is that there are too many 'organizations' involved in the present and future stewardship of the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. This perception does not seem to embrace the notion, the more the merrier. Society Chairman Pat Bates addresses this conundrum in his article entitled "Good Stewardship: A Love Affair With The Bras d'Or."

Many years ago a publication known as The Whole Earth Quarterly, an eclectic journalistic endeavor that evolved from Stewart Brand's Whole Earth Catalogue, printed an article entitled "THE POLITICS OF PLACE". The theme being that if one desires to make an impact on the global picture, a person must be willing first to 'act' locally and 'think' globally.

The "politics of place" embrace the obvious principle that the individual first must have the will to take local

responsibility and engage in local issues. This local level commitment will have long-term global impact. The process of globalization now has become almost a mantra of sorts as world economics become more integrated and the need for natural resources grow excessively to fuel the rapacious global economy.

The fact that there are a number of agencies and volunteer groups working on the behalf of protecting and conserving the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed should be positively viewed as a veritable 'personification' of the notion of 'the politics of place' at work at the local level. The key is to act locally, but think globally. The more people do this, the greater will be the enhancement of knowledge leading to a better understanding of the challenge of the politics of place as it pertains to the responsible stewardship of the Bras d'Or and creating a dedicated conservation constituency.

In this edition of the Blue Heron, the overriding theme is, indeed, the 'politics of place'. Combine Catherine Godwin's article, Pat Bates's contribution and Bruce Hatcher's piece on the reconstitution of the Bras d'Or Institute together and the message is none other than that described in the following paragraph by Karl Hess in his article 'The Politics of Place' published in the summer 1981 Whole Earth Quarterly:

*"The politics of place has one thing in common with any other kind of politics or, indeed, any other social endeavor. It involves constituency. Put it another way it involves friends and envisioning neighborly relations. Conventional politics does it rhetorically, as in merchandising, using the lingo pulling*

## NOTICE

**THE SEMI-ANNUAL  
MEETING OF THE SOCIETY  
WILL BE HELD AT THE  
BADDECK COMMUNITY  
HALL ON AUGUST 13, 2005  
AT 2:00 PM.**

**ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED  
TO ATTEND AS WELL AS  
INTERESTED CITIZENS WHO  
ARE CONCERNED WITH THE  
FUTURE STEWARDSHIP OF  
THE BRAS D'OR LAKES.**

*it together, common causes, and enlightened self-interest. The politics of place has to do it concretely, getting neighbors interested in something, working together to do it, letting other neighbors see the work, make judgments, and perhaps join the next step, the next work."*

The Whole Earth Quarterly  
Summer 1981

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



## **NEWS ITEMS:**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:**

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on March 22, 2005 at the Alexander Graham Bell Museum. Close to 35 individuals turned out. There was both lively and provocative discussion regarding the proposed strip mining on Boularderie Island. MLA Gerald Sampson spoke regarding his support of the promoting good stewardship of the Bras d'Or Lakes. MLA Sampson also reiterated his stance against strip mining.

### **BRAS D'OR INSTITUTE RECONSTITUTED:**

Cape Breton University has elected to fund and staff The Bras d'Or Institute, an entity that once held an important role in studying island wide issues. Bruce Hatcher, the new director, has summarized this welcomed turn of events in this newsletter. (See Bras d'Or Institute Revitalized)

### **SOCIETY PROVIDES SCHOLARSHIP:**

On June 22, 2005 a board member of the Society presented Alex MacAulay with a five hundred dollar cheque as a stipend for continuing his education. Alex was chosen as the winner of the first scholarship provided by the society to a graduating high school student who resides in the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed. Alex essay was selected as the winning entry. His essay is reproduced in the current newsletter. (See article by Jim O'Brien)

### **CLOSURE OF CROWDIS MT. SEWAGE LAGOON:**

On April 14, 2005 a meeting was held at the Middle River Community Hall to discuss the close out plan of the sewage lagoon on Crowdis Mountain. Representatives from the Nova Scotia Department of Environment

and Labor and Natural Resources met with a group of concerned citizens to discuss the closure plan. It was decided that monitoring of the closure of the site be overseen by a selected third party entity to avoid any doubts regarding partisanship. A summary of the meeting has been provided in a report entitled, "Report on the Community Consultation on the Closure of the Crowdis Mountain Septage Disposal Site".

### **MACKINNON'S HARBOR SURVIVAL ASSOCIATION:**

At the May board meeting of the Society held at the Highland Village in Iona representatives of the MacKinnon's Harbor Survival Association made a presentation regarding changes in the dredging regulations for the entrance to MacKinnon's Harbor. The Nova Scotian Department of Natural Resources will no longer allow dredging spoils to be deposited in the present location. The entrance to MacKinnon's Harbor was opened several years ago to allow boats to enter. The society has written a letter to the association supporting their efforts to continue to dredge the entrance to McKinnon's Harbor

### **ROSS'S FERRY MARINE PARK:**

The Ross's Ferry Stewardship Society applied for and received a substantial amount of funds to upgrade the old ferry wharf. Funds totaling \$250,000.00 dollars are being provided by Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation and the Municipality of Victoria to carry out the upgrades which will provide a pump out station, a wharf for boats to tie along side as well as a concrete ramp to launch boats.

### **WHYCOCOMAGH WHARF IMPROVEMENTS:**

The SS Marion Society is undertaking a community wharf upgrade to

enhance its marina capacity. The community wharf has undergone major improvements that will be an asset to recreational boaters and tourists. The wharf will provide sewage pump out services to boat owners, a first for Whycocomagh Bay. The Whycocomagh waterfront also has a new resort facility with the capability of providing seminar and conference facilities as well as high quality tourist accommodations. Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation has provided funds for this project with a proposed cost of \$250,000.00 as well as assisted the new Keltic Key Resort.

### **CANADA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE:**

June 20-23, 2005 - by Lynn Baechler

As in the past, a representative from the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society was invited to speak to public service managers, attending a Leadership Development Module located in Sydney, Cape Breton.

The format was a dialogue session, where our Board member presented the challenges and successes we have experienced as a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in the environmental sector in the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed.

### **2005 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN:**

This year's membership campaign is a head of the total funds raised in 2004, but our number of contributors is down. Each year the society requires support through membership contributions. We hope that you will continue to contribute and support the Society's efforts.

### **2005 SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING:**

This meeting will be held on August 13, 2005. No speaker has been scheduled for this date. The board

*Cont'd on page 4*

## Good Stewardship: A Love Affair with The Bras d'Or

By Pat Bates

Characteristically, we Canadians are perceived as a rather placid people who are not readily disposed to displaying emotion or our feelings on any subject. Yet, there is evidence that we are starting to change from this style of conduct at last in a manner in which our appreciation for the Bras d'Or Lakes is concerned. The notion that we take things for granted, especially care of such a great resource and natural phenomena as the Bras d'Or, is disappearing. Some of us are convinced that improved communication built on the lever of education and elements of public awareness is hopefully turning our attention to the importance of preserving and protecting the Bras d'Or Lakes. The reasonable question to be asked, I believe, is who is minding the store?"

A strange observation has been made to me on a number of occasions. It goes something like this, "I think there are too many organizations involved on the Bras d'Or. Why can't they come together into one?"

I am not sure what prompts this comment because people who are responsible offer it; they are concerned about the health of the Lakes. Sometimes we do not communicate as well as we should and unfortunately, although we have good media venues on Cape Breton, we have not managed to establish a single media format that can provide coverage of all news items and public notices that have relevance and application to each and every community bordering the Bras d'Or Lakes. I believe it was Dr. Teresa Mac Neil who said on one occasion that the Bras D'Or is not yet a community of communities.

Back to the point, 'too many groups'. I beg to differ! There are

two categories of participating groups with mandates to function with the Bras d'Or Watershed. One is the cluster of Municipal-Provincial-Federal authorities that have legitimate function under law that they are entitled and we expect to enforce. Over the past four years a measure of order has been established under the title of Sustainable Community Initiatives (SCI) enabling all agencies to better coordinate their work related to the watershed. An allied component of this cluster is a relatively new form whereby the Mayors, Wardens and First Nations Chiefs or their delegates come together in a coordinating group called the Pitu'paq Committee. These actions represent a consolidation and unification of the work of various administrative and legal authorities. This is a huge improvement over the past practices of dispersal of best efforts.

Critical to the work of protecting the Bras d'Or Lakes is the existence of (and growing) number of community economic development organizations around the Lakes. These entities represent a growing interest by citizens in promoting the economic and social well being of their small communities.

This marshalling of community interest extends to all activities on or near the Lakeshore.

A few examples of such initiatives would include the Ben Eoin/East Bay Development Association, the Ben Eoin Camp Site, the Lions Club Marina at St. Peter's, the Marble Mountain Wharf and Waterfront Association, the Orangedale Community Group including Denys Pond, the Whycocomagh Wharf and Community Association, the Ross's Ferry Stewardship Society, the MacKinnon's Harbor Survival Association, the Baddeck Harbor Development Commission and the MacNeil's Cove Mooring Group.

The Unimaki Institute of Natural Resources and the Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission are at

the center of many initiatives and planning activity, all resourced at their respective offices in Eskasoni. The Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) is the mechanism through which all interested groups may participate in the work of planning for the long-term protection of the Bras d'Or Lakes.

We all share an open forum. We also share, as a volunteer organization a desire to create consensus on problem solving that will lead to responsible and accountable action on all issues.

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## "A View From My Deck"

By Mabel MacEachern,  
Board Member

Have you ever been awakened by the haunting sound of a loon? Have you ever watched the beauty of an eagle soaring so near that you know you saw it blink? Or perhaps you just sat & watched as a continuous stream of hummingbirds spent their day feasting on the sweet solution in the feeder. Sound too tranquil to be true? Well, these are just a few of the pleasures that I experience on my deck each & every summer, being a resident of Irishvale, located on the Bras d'Or Lake. I am lucky enough to witness nature in its truest form, and it is a gift that I treasure, and hope to for many years to come.

I have witnessed many changes in the landscape over the years I have resided there. When I spent my first summer there, the "Million Dollar Stretch" of highway winding through Irish Cove was not there. Nor was the limestone quarry, although for many years, the evidence was visible that one existed; a complete eyesore to the community, but thankfully, it has been replaced by a beautiful green space.

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has decided to engage a facilitator to discuss in an open forum topics that concern all who are interested in the future stewardship of the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed.

**SILTATION IN WEST BAY:**

Concern has been registered regarding the level of siltation from run off into the Bras d'Or in the West Bay area. Speculation is that the discoloration of the water along the shoreline and in a barrachois area is a product of land excavation, which includes ditching, land preparation and general run off. Siltation can lead to habitat degradation and affect water quality.

**5000 HECTARES  
SPRAYED TO COMBAT  
BUDWORM:**

On July 5, 2005 spraying was completed over 5000 hectares of forest in the Cape Breton Highlands to combat the black-headed spruce budworm infestation. The control product known as BTK (bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki) was used to combat the infestation. This budworm infestation covers 114,000 hectares of balsam fir forest. As always, there is concern about watershed contamination from the chemical spray.

**PROVINCE ORDERS  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDIES:**

The proposed controversial strip mining of coal from sites on Boularderie Island has been a lightening rod of controversy. The provincial government has ordered that appropriate environmental studies be carried out prior to any mining activity. The Society has written appropriate officials stating that necessary environmental studies must be carried out to assess potential adverse effects to ground water, flora and fauna as well as the impact of any mining operations on property values and the local fishery adjacent to mining sites.

# Maintaining Your Onsite Sewage Disposal System

By Kelly Morrison  
Sharon Carter

Ever wonder where the stuff we flush or pour down the drain goes? Well, if you live in a rural area it most likely goes to your own onsite sewage disposal system (OSSDS).

On site sewage disposal systems treat and dispose of your everyday household sewage. An on-site system includes a septic tank and a disposal field that work hand in hand to treat wastewater.

Every time you flush, shower or pour something down the drain the septic system receives and treats it.

An onsite system is a recycling system that uses natural processes to treat and dispose of 'sewage' or wastewater from normal activities in your home.

There are several ways to ensure your system is maintained and can effectively treat wastewater from your home for many years.

One of the main ways you can prolong the life of your septic system is to have it pumped regularly. On average the tank should be pumped every 3 years, or when required, depending on the amount of use and the type of materials that enter the system.

Septic tanks also work better at warmer temperatures so it is a good idea to pump your tank during summer or fall. This will leave time before winter for the tank to refill and

for bacterial action to re-establish itself.

One thought to keep in mind is that planting trees and shrubs (especially willows or poplars) near the disposal field is risky because their roots travel significant distances to seek water and can plug or damage the pipes.

Also never water the grass over the



field. Watering interferes with the soil's ability to absorb liquids and break down wastes.



The field at Hector's Point, as it turns green is spectacular to witness. Evidence of a property lovingly cared for, but without residency now, is a huge big empty field, overlooking the Bras d'Or. As I turn my head further down the lake, I witness the growing community of Eskasoni. The beautiful big building sitting so majestically on the hill reminds me of a keeper overlooking the community, and a great area of the watershed. As I continue to watch, I see the wind turbine that has been built; on a calm day, it sits imposing on the landscape until the winds seemingly convince it to put on a show, as it spins, it sparkles, and it glistens in the sunlight.

As I turn my head slightly in direction on the lake, I can see the exquisite white shore line of Marble Mountain as the sun starts its late afternoon journey towards sunset, the marble shines and sparkles like a white jeweled area. Looking slightly to the right, I see the beautiful little white church that was moved from Malagawash to Iona's Highland Village. I was not privileged to see it floating down the lake on its way to a new resting spot, but I am privileged to enjoy and value its splendor on the hill.

Many changes have taken place around the Bras d'Or since I spent my first summer in Irishvale. One of the biggest changes I am witness to is the continuous construction of both summer homes, and permanent residences.

A bit of erosion of the beach line, in the area where I reside, has taken place over the years, but it's not been drastic, and it is a natural process.

What I have been, and continue to be witness to is the peace, beauty, and serenity of the Bras d'Or.

As we promote our island as a beautiful place to live and raise our children, may we always remember we are the keepers of the land, and in doing so, may we always enjoy, and work to preserve the awesome beauty of the Great Bras d'Or.

## **Inaugural Bras d'Or Stewardship Society Scholarship.**

**F**or a number of years the Society has considered funding an annual scholarship for high school students. In the early part of 2004 the Board of Directors of the Society decided to make concrete plans for such a scholarship, the first of which was to be offered for the 2004- 2005 academic year. To do this in September 2004 Board appointed a scholarship sub committee consisting of Dr. Chris Milburn, Lynn Baechler and Jim O'Brien.

The Committee considered a number of options before bringing forward a short questionnaire to be voted on, item by item, by the Board members at the regular monthly meeting of the Board in November 2004. The final form of the scholarship was decided by the outcome of these votes.

The result was as follows. The Board decided the Scholarship was to be a single annual one of \$500.00. It was to be open to all Grade 12 High School Students, irrespective of the school they attended, who had already been accepted for further education and who lived within the Bras d'Or Lakes Watershed. The award was to be given to the writer of the best essay of approximately 500 words addressing a subject chosen by the Board. From a number of suggestions the subject chosen for the essay for this the initial year was; - "Water – Accessibility, Quality and / or Management but does not have to be limited to these areas."

The Secretary of the Board Lynn Baechler did the detailed work necessary to make the existence of the scholarship known to the various high school administrations around Cape Breton Island and to have the conditions and application forms available for students.

Given this is, comparatively speaking, a quite generous scholarship Board members were somewhat disappointed by the number of entrants (5) but this was the initial year. In the future when students become more aware of the existence of the scholarship we hope there will be more interest shown and more entrants. The embers are also aware that this was a first effort and may benefit from changes. Members

of the Society are invited to comment, criticize and make suggestions with regard to the current format with a view to making changes for future years.

The Directors and the members of the Society wish to congratulate Alex MacDonald of Baddeck Academy the winner of this, the Society's inaugural Scholarship. His winning essay appears in this issue of the Blue Heron.

*Jim O'Brien*

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## **Water Accessibility and Management Around the Bras d'Or**

By Alex Macaulay

**A**ccessing the Bras d'Or Lakes has been getting harder and harder for the general public the past number of years due to private land ownership. This has been an increasing problem because people have been buying up acres of land for their own private use instead of land being open to use by the people of the area. When the land is being sold, there are no restrictions put on how much land can be purchased by one person.

The fact that there are no restrictions means that a person could buy up 1,000 acres of water front property and make it inaccessible to the people of the area. Public water access in

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Baddeck consists of Kidston Island and the board walks. Everything else is private land or business waterfront such as the marinas. To combat this problem the government of Nova Scotia should put regulations on how much land can be purchased by one person and also designate land for public use so everyone can enjoy our beautiful "inland sea".

As far as management of the lakes goes, the strong fisheries that use to exist in the lakes are no more due to poor management of the aquatic resources. For example, the once strong lobster fishery has been in decline because of over fishing and poor management.

To get the fishery back to where it should be, we must take it upon ourselves to make sure that strict guidelines are followed with regards to catch sizes. We should make sure the lobsters are of legal size and combat the use of illegal traps. If the rules are followed and the stocks monitored the lobsters will reach reproductive stage and the population.

Sewage has been a big problem for the Bras d'Or Lakes in the past. Boats and homes pumped raw sewage into the lakes for years. Boats could empty their bilges without consequence on the Bras d'Or hurting the natural habitat and aquatic life. Now, rules put in place and supposedly enforced by government agencies outlaw this. Stiff penalties may be levied on any boats

found to have pumped out effluent into the water. This has been a positive step to make our waters clean again. Tourists and residents should find the shorefront more inviting.

Houses have been a major culprit with regards to sewage contamination in the area. The former Baddeck treatment plant was not big enough to handle the number of dwellings using it. This meant that sewage was pumped into the lake. This was not a good thing. Since the new Baddeck wastewater treatment plant has been built, all of the sewage from the village of Baddeck is now properly treated.

Living near the lakes being able to enjoy them is great. We have to focus on keeping this "inland sea" accessible for everyone from this area and our visitors in the future.

(This essay was awarded the first Society scholarship offered in 2005 by The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society.)

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## ***Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA)***

by Lynn Baechler

Individuals and organizations committed to the effective management of Canada's water resources formed CWRA in 1947. Members come from diverse backgrounds, engineers, hydro geologists, surface water hydro geologists, agriculturalists, foresters,

biologists, ecologists, planners, managers, administrators, First Nations, industry, consultants and government, to discuss local and regional water and watershed issues.

The goals of CWRA include stimulating public awareness and understanding of Canada's water resources, encouraging public recognition of the high priority of water as a valued resource and providing a forum for the exchange of information and opinions relating to the management of Canada's water resources.

One of our Board members recently attended the National CWRA conference in Banff Alberta. This was a highly successful event with respect to participants, speakers and location! The common theme throughout the conference was, "water is an ecosystem linkage and must be managed within its watershed".

Various watershed management models were described. Papers were presented on water governance in Canada, water from the First nations perspective, public participation, water scarcity and water conservation, nutrient loading to watercourses, low impact development techniques, source protection, and water allocation.

In her welcoming remarks, which reflected the theme of the conference, Beverly Yee, Assistant Deputy Minister, Alberta Environment, stated, "The future will be an age of stewardship

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***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.***



and shared responsibility. There will be a shift from water management to watershed management (a natural unit rather than a political unit), including conservation and wise use, source protection, information and knowledge, transparency and access to information."

The conference summation panel, reflected on governance, and the fact central government is downloading responsibilities for management without contributing financial resources. A common theme was that most jurisdictions employ crisis management, and that there is no political will to make information based decisions, using watershed knowledge, watershed issues and watershed needs.

Across the country, the main issues blocking successful watershed management are: lack of financial support, lack of technical support, lack of support for local decisions, lack of commitment to monitoring and regulating, and a lack of integrated surface and groundwater management.

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## **Global Water Concerns Reflected in the Arm of Gold**

By Catherine Godwin

**P**rotect, conserve, restore. These action words, adopted by the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society in 1997, truly reflect the many projects and efforts of the Society to improve the quality of water in that scenic inland sea that brings so much pleasure, joy, and beauty to our lives, regardless of the season. My ancestral roots are deeply embedded in land around the Lake and I am proud to support the work of the Society. The Bras d'Or is a treasure, a precious asset, a fragile body of water the health of which is dependent upon our attitudes and actions. Never has

there been so much knowledge related to the environment and never has there been such easy access to it. The challenge for each of us is to internalize that knowledge and translate it into actions that reflect a healthy and respectful attitude toward the Lake.

Ever mindful of the fragility of the Lake, we might also consider local and global concerns regarding safe drinking water. The finite amount of potable water on our earth is threatened daily by pollution and contamination from many sources. In a news release on World Water Day, March 22, 2005, the United Nations stated: "UNEP (United Nations Environmental Program) accords high priority in its activities to the protection, conservation and efficient use of global water resources in response to the growing water-related environmental problems worldwide. The world's water resources are our lifeline for survival, and for sustainable development in the twenty-first century

Because freshwater does not stop flowing at river mouths, but flows right into coastal waters. UNEP has pioneered addressing integrated coastal area and river basin management in a holistic and integrated approach." The United Nations has declared 2005 - 2015 an International Decade for Action with the theme 'Water for Life'.

Many national and international organizations have developed programs and resource material to heighten awareness of the need to protect and conserve our freshwater sources, the oceans, and the global environment that we all share. So much good material is available. Let's take the ideas to heart, make them part of our daily activities, and share them with family, friends, and colleagues. Let's be proactive in our social milieu, our church organizations, and community groups by providing leadership and encouragement to explore the many water issues in the world today. Each of us together can

make a tremendous difference.

One Final Thought: Thomas Berry, noted environmentalist, cautions us: "An absence of the sense of the sacred is the basic flaw in many efforts at ecologically and environmentally adjusting our human presence to the natural world. It has been said 'We will not save what we do not love.' It is also true that we will neither love nor save what we do not experience as sacred. Eventually only our sense of the sacred will save us."

Web Sites are a great source of information. The following sites have been recommended as worth exploring:

- [www.un.org/waterforlifedecade](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade),
- [www.omrn.ca](http://www.omrn.ca),
- [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org),
- [www.unep.org/themes/water](http://www.unep.org/themes/water),
- [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org),
- [www.thewaterpage.com](http://www.thewaterpage.com),
- [www.united-church.ca/ecology/water](http://www.united-church.ca/ecology/water),
- [www.livingbywater.ca](http://www.livingbywater.ca),
- [www.cccb.ca/Files/pastoralenvironment](http://www.cccb.ca/Files/pastoralenvironment),
- [www.cfore.ca](http://www.cfore.ca)



# **The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society**

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**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: [stewardship@baddeck.com](mailto:stewardship@baddeck.com)

**2005**

## **BRAS D'OR STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY**

- |                 |                          |          |         |  |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------|---------|--|
| MEMBER          | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$15.00  |         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am in favour of conserving and restoring the<br>Bras d'Or Lake and watershed through<br>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



# **THE BRAS D'OR INSTITUTE FOR ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH REVITALIZED.**

By Bruce Hatcher, Director

Recognizing the importance of both surrounding and inland sea to the viability of Cape Breton Society, President John Harker and the University's Board of Governors have allocated resources for the re-establishment of the Bras d'Or Institute, which was founded over 30 years ago. The vision is the true sustenance of the Cape Breton ecosystem, including its people, and the mission is to bring the resources of the University to bear on solving the problems of the community.

The Bras d'Or Institute was founded in 1972 at Xavier Jnr. College as the university's second research institute (after the Beaton Inst.). Over a 22-year history it grew in several directions, spinning off other institutes, and culminating in the formation of the Office of Research and Academic Institutes at UCCB. The broad, overarching purpose of the original Institute was to stimulate research, development and enquiry relevant to Cape Breton.

Following brief leadership from two, part-time directors, Dr. Donald Arseneau (Professor of Chemistry) was appointed as the full-time Director in 1975. Under his leadership over the next 20 years the Institute developed and completed hundreds of research initiatives and projects within six program areas: Agriculture, Aquaculture, Coal-Coke-Steel, Environment, Innovation & Invention, and Social Health & Development. Approximately 20% of the research and project work focused on aquaculture, fisheries and integrated coastal zone management. The typical, annual, external budget was approximately \$166k/y, reaching a peak of \$664k in 1994. These external funds were primed and augmented by internal University funding of approximately \$90k/y.

The institute was closed in 1994 with the retirement of Dr. Arseneau and imposition of campus-wide funding constraints. As part of a campus-wide strengthening of research capacity, the Bras d'Or Institute for Ecosystem Research was re-established on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2005 under the directorship of Dr. Bruce G. Hatcher, recently appointed as the Chair of Marine Ecosystem Research at Cape Breton University. At that time, Dr. Don Arseneau was appointed as the first Honorary Research Fellow of the Institute. This arrangement will foster continuity of purpose and process as the institute re-

builds itself.

Much has changed at the University and in Cape Breton since the original Institute closed in 1994. Many of the research activities initiated under the Bras d'Or Institute are now undertaken by other agencies and institutions: there is a clear need to focus the work of the new Institute. A public consultation on the mission and objectives of the Bras d'Or Institute was held on 4 February 2005, and the process of defining the role of the Institute is on-going.

**Vision:** True sustenance of the Cape Breton ecosystem, including its people.

**Mission:** Bring the resources of the University to bear on the problems of the community.

**Statement of Purpose:** The Bras d'Or Institute for Ecosystem Research facilitates an effective application of the resources of Cape Breton University to the challenges facing the human communities and ecosystems of Cape Breton as they strive for ecological, economic and cultural sustainability.

The Institute serves as a stable, two-way window for communities of residence, vocation and interest within and beyond the University seeking to define and operationalize ecosystem-based management of natural resources and human activity within the island of Cape Breton and its external and internal seas. Off-campus researchers are provided predictable access to the diversity of knowledge, skills and resources maintained by the University, and faculty members are given entrée to the diversity of expertise and opportunity afforded by the ecosystems of Cape Breton and their people.

The Institute contributes to the achievement of societal ambitions for health and prosperity by fostering holistic, participatory, multi and interdisciplinary scientific research for management decision support aimed at maintaining the diversity, quality and magnitude of ecosystem goods and services provided to the humans and other components of Cape Breton's ecosystems.

**Mandate:** The Institute acquires supports and co-ordinates human resources, research tools and facilities within and beyond the University for the purpose of realizing the Vision and achieving the Mission.

The Institute fosters and conducts research on all aspects of ecosystem-based management.

The Institute gives priority to collaborative research that provides timely decision-

support to initiatives in ecosystem-based management, and augments on-going and planned programs of ecosystem science and integrated management.

The Institute maintains and disseminates data products, information and reference materials pertinent to the aquatic, marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Cape Breton. This includes the support of acquisitions and web-access to the database of the Bras d'Or Collection, held at the Cape Breton University Library.

The Institute establishes and sustains liaisons, communications and collaborations with other institutions, agencies and interest groups studying and governing in the ecosystems of Cape Breton, as well as in environments and situations elsewhere that are relevant to the local domain.

The Institute applies for, secures, disburses and accounts for external funds necessary to support the mandated research activities and projects, and the effective delivery of their outputs to empowered, decision-making and community entities.

**Governance:** The Director of the Institute is responsible for all aspects of the operation of the Institute, and is accountable to the Vice-President Academic and Research of Cape Breton University. The Institute's and the Director's performance are reviewed at 5 year intervals.

A voluntary Advisory Board consisting of no more than six (6) members, four of whom are drawn from outside the University community, will meet no less than three (3) times per year and provide guidance to the Director on all aspects of the Institute's policies and operations.

**Resources:** The Bras d'Or Institute for Ecosystem Research will start with a base allocation of 20% of the professional time (i.e. 1 day per week) of the Chair of Marine Ecosystem Research, the part-time services of a voluntary Research Fellow, an office with standard secretarial and communications services, a meeting room, a dedicated library with professional maintenance, a professionally designed and maintained web-site, and an internal operating budget of \$5.k per annum.

For further information: Contact Bruce Hatcher, Director, Cape Breton University, PO Box 5300, 1250 Grand Lake Road, Sydney, NS B1P 6L2. Tel: 901-563-1988. Fax: 902-563-1880.

Email: [Bruce\\_hatcher@capebretonu.ca](mailto:Bruce_hatcher@capebretonu.ca)

# LET'S TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BRAS D'OR

## How Do We Affect Water Quality?

Shellfish closures are the first indication of deteriorating water quality. There are already over 30 shellfish closures in the Bras d'Or Lakes. **DID YOU KNOW?** The human waste from one person, in one day, can contaminate one acre of water and force shellfish closures. **YOU CONTAMINATE THE WATER IF YOU:** A) Flush waste into an overloaded sewage system, and most sewage treatment facilities in the Bras d'Or are overloaded. B) Have an on-site septic system that is leaking and not properly maintained. C) Are boaters flushing human waste directly into the lake.

## What Can We Do?

**CONSERVE WATER:** Did you know that every time we flush, we use up to 22 liters of clean water? Using less water ensures less pressure on village sewage systems and on your septic system. **II PRACTICE THE 3 R'S OF WATER CONSERVATION:** (a) **REDUCE:** Use water saving devices such as shower savers and toilet dams. (b) **REPAIR:** One small leak can waste thousands of liters of water per year. (c) **RETROFIT:** Choose water efficient fixtures and appliances when replacement is needed. **III TAKE CARE OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM:** A malfunctioning septic system can contaminate ground water and effluents will leak into the Bras d'Or. Eventually, this will reduce your property value. Make sure your septic system is working, and have it pumped every 3-5 years. You can contact your local Department of Environment for information on septic systems maintenance. The less water you flush into your septic system, the more completely treated each liter of waste will be. Do not feed your septic system any oils or garborated foods. This slows the effectiveness of your system and causes it to malfunction. **IV TAKE CARE OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM:** Stop flushing raw sewage into the lake. Deteriorating water quality will affect the enjoyment you get out of boating around the Bras d'Or Lakes. Have a holding tank installed and pumped regularly. Pumping stations around the Bras d'Or are located in: Baddeck, Dundee and St. Peter's.

**Raising Awareness:** There are community groups around the Bras d'Or concerned with water quality issues. Consider joining your local community group. Ensure that the Bras d'Or does not face further contamination. Raise your water quality and environmental concerns with the appropriate responsible authority.

## Who Can Be Contacted?

### Septic Tank Maintenance

N.S. Department of Environment  
Baddeck: (902) 295-2159 Sydney: (902) 563-2100

### Sewage Treatment

Municipal Council: (902) 295-3231  
Village Commission: (902) 295-3666

### Water Quality Issues

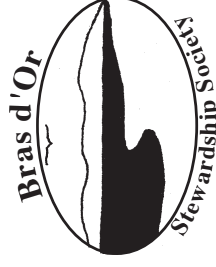
Environment Canada (902) 426-7231  
N.S. Department of Environment  
Baddeck: (902) 295-2159 Sydney: (902) 563-2100

### Enforcement & Monitoring of Shellfish Closures

Department of Fisheries & Oceans  
Baddeck: (902) 295-2557 Sydney: (902) 564-7708

### Community Groups

Bras d'Or Stewardship Society: (902) 756-3264 Eskasoni Wildlife Association: (902) 379-2024



## TO JOIN THE BRAS D'OR STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY:

Write: P.O. Box 158, Baddeck, Nova Scotia B0E 1B0  
Phone: 756-3264

or visit Website: [www.capebretonet.com/baddeck/bss](http://www.capebretonet.com/baddeck/bss)

## BRAS D'OR STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY MEMBER FEES

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$15.00

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$25.00

## CLEAN WATER IN THE BRAS D'OR LAKES...OUR COMMON GOAL, OUR COMMON FUTURE!