



# THE BLUE HERON

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

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

VOLUME 9

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE - JULY 2007

NO. 2

This issue of The Blue Heron celebrates the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society's (BSS) in August 1997.

Current and long standing board member Dr. James V. O'Brien has provided an article on the origin and development of the Society while at the same highlighting some of the work of the Society over the past ten years.

There is no doubt that over the last ten years that the Society has established itself as a credible non-profit membership based stewardship organization dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration on the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. Financially, the Society is strong and still commands a respectable public following.

Not a day goes by without major articles on the environment published or voiced in the media. There are web sites devoted to the myriad of threats

of global warming, destruction of wildlife habitat, animal species disappearance, pollution damage and the debate about the reality or otherwise of global warming. There are many environmental issues that confront us locally as well as globally.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society, in March 2007 the board decided that a significant event should be held to celebrate our ten-year journey. This event will be held in Iona on July 27, 2007. (See News Items)

Though there are those who deny global warming is taking place, the vast majority of scientists believe it is a reality though most of us in North America have not been significantly impacted. We fortunately have not as yet had to suffer food shortages, change our transportation habits or suffer severe water shortages. Unfortunately others are not so lucky. For instance farmers in Australia are suffering a severe drought that is devastating their traditional soil bound livelihoods. With this in mind, on June 23, 2007 the Globe And Mail ran an extensive article on the severe drought in the southwestern parts of the United States.

In Nova Scotia, impacts of climate change are already noticeable. A recent CBC Information morning program highlighted the encroachment of water and the incipient destruction of ecologically significant salt marshes along the Bay of Fund's coastline. The water level has been predicted to rise on the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Meanwhile, there are those who

deny global warming is a significant environmental threat. Recently, a small religious publication suggested that the debate was overheated. The argument was that whatever is occurring will be taken care of by the powers that be i.e. God. The suggestion is that we are powerless to do anything. We are not in control!

In this issue we are pleased to include an article by Bethsheila Kent that provides insight into the life of

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## NOTICE

**ON SATURDAY,  
JULY 28, 2007**

**THE SOCIETY WILL  
CELEBRATE ITS  
10TH ANNIVERSARY**

**AT  
ST. COLUMBA PARISH HALL  
IN IONA AT 2:00 PM.**

**TICKETS FOR THE EVENT ARE  
LIMITED TO 225 PEOPLE AND  
ARE BEING SOLD IN LOCAL  
COMMUNITY PHARMACIES.**

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



*Opening message cont'd...*

the blue heron the elegant bird from which the Society newsletter takes its name. It is felt that our 'avian totem' deserves recognition and celebration given its stately presence in the Bras d'Or watershed.

The blue heron is just one of many significant bird species that finds a sustainable seasonal habitat within the Bras d'Or Lakes's watershed. This bird is indeed a stately creature that frequents many locations along the Bras d'Or shoreline as it feeds on fish and bottom dwellers. There once existed several local rookeries that allowed the blue heron to raise its young in protected areas. Today, such rookeries seem to have moved or disappeared or at least are not well documented.

There is nothing more satisfying than sighting this bird in mirror flat Bras d'Or waters early in the morning as it searches for food. The blue heron is albeit an awkward appearing creature that exudes a sense of all consuming grace as it takes flight. That is why we choose the bird as a symbol for the Society!

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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.***

## TEN YEARS IN THE LIFE OF THE UNIVERSE

The year 2007 will likely go down in history as the turning point when humankind came to the realization that we could not go on desecrating our environment which is the developed practices of the preceding one hundred years. The chill or the scare of the consequences of our actions and conduct are appearing before our eyes in the way we live our everyday lives. The way, in which we respond to glitz advertisements, the sharp rise in consumerism and the quest for instant satisfaction is manifested in the sign and scale of our "throw away" society, frequently with little care as to where we discharge or "throw away."

The Bras d'Or Lake would be no more than a dot on the sphere of the world, yet to management and members of the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society, it symbolizes just how ordinary people recognizing the damage to a great natural resource can act to make a difference. To reverse environment degradation requires enlightenment, commitment, and action. We believe that over the past ten years, the one hundred and fifty members of the Society, through the Board of Directors and their financial support, have made important gains in securing the long-term protection and restoration of the Bras d'Or Lake.

Largely through aggressive advocacy and direction, we have realized the construction of the new sewage treatment plant in Baddeck, establishment of new federal legislation preventing discharge of sewage from boats, and more stringent regulations governing

discharge of ballast water into the Lake from commercial vessels. We have initiated work toward eventual establishment of regulation governing development and construction or establishment of buildings, trailers, etc. near water's edge in a manner harmful to the Lake and its environment. Mining and construction firms frequently consult the Society's Board of Directors prior to beginning projects to avoid taking action that would cause damage to the ecology of the Lake and its watershed.

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society acknowledges the role played by other organizations where now many groups and individuals have come together to collaborate and support actions to conserve and protect the Lake. Co-operation in awareness building, and consensus on courses of action and follow-up to protect the Lake and its marine life and wild life is happening. While the job is far from complete, we wager that the Lake has more friends now than ten years ago.

We will likely remember 2007 as the year of the great debate over Kyoto, the expressions of concern over climate change and earth warming. Or we may recall the work of Al Gore, environmental activist and author of "An Inconvenient Truth" and the predictions of eventual climatic calamity on the rising of oceans.

There can be no sliding back. We are all stewards of our environment and there can be no rationing of our atmosphere but a sharing of responsibility to act as custodians of the earth's resources and jointly accountable when we fail

Pat Bates, Chairman

The Bras d'Or Stewardship  
Society

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# NEWS ITEMS:

## Annual General Meeting:

On Saturday March 24, 2007 the annual general meeting of the Society was held at the Bell Museum in Baddeck. Both the President's report and Treasurer's Report were presented. A presentation was made by Shauna Barrington regarding her current work with the Mabou Development Association regarding Mabou harbor. About twenty individuals attended the annual meeting. Shelly Porter representing the Unimaki Institute reviewed the progress of the Collaborative Environmental Planning Group (CEPI).

## An Inconvenient Truth:

The title of Al Gore's highly popular book and film, "An Inconvenient Truth", regarding the hotly debated issue of global warming will be the subject of the Society's 10th anniversary celebration to be held at the St. Columba Parish Hall in Iona on July 27, 2007. The Society will have 200 tickets for \$10.00 each at local drug stores around the Lakes and from individual board members.

## Bagnell Fine:

The Society received a cheque for \$3,000.00, which represented a fine levied for an improper infill along the shore of Baddeck Bay. This money will be used to educate the public about laws and regulations in place regarding infilling and despoliation of habitat. To date the property owner has not followed through on the court stipulation that the property be

remediated from the environmental degradation that occurred from the unauthorized infill of wetlands.

## Bequest Received:

In February 2007 the Society received a bequest of \$2,000.00US from the estate of Mabel Grosvenor who died in November 2006. Dr. Mabel was a keen and perspicacious observer of what was going on around her. She had a 101 year life long relationship with the Bras d'Or Lakes given her family's property holdings on Beinn Breagh. The Society is both indebted and grateful to Dr. Mabel for her support and concern for the future stewardship of the Bras d'Or Lakes.

## Student Employment:

The Society made application for two summer students to carry out a specific project in regard to monitoring shoreline protection focusing on marine estuaries. We were fortunate to get two well qualified students to carry out this work for an eleven week period; Ashley Druhan a science major at Acadia University and Grant Petruskavich an engineering student at the University of Cape Breton. (See University Students page 4.....)

## Student Prizes Formerly a Scholarship:

For a number of reasons this year the Board offered three prizes rather than one scholarship to High School students for an essay on a selected topic. The winners were as follows. First prize Matthew Hastings of Baddeck Academy (\$300.00). Second prize Erica Fraser (\$200.00) and third prize James Emmanuel

Mombourquette (\$100.00). Both are students at Richmond Academy.

## Life Celebrations:

Below are the names to two individuals who recently have made the journey from this mundane earthly world to their final resting place. Both individuals profiled below were dedicated in their commitment to making the world a better place to live by the mantra, 'act locally, and think globally'.

### *Dan E. MacNeil:*

On May 21, 2007 Dan MacNeil, age 46, lost his tenacious battle with cancer. Dan was a great community citizen who represented his community as the local Victoria County Councilor. He was active in many community organizations. He was supportive of the activities of The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society. We are pleased to be having our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in his church's parish hall in Iona on July 27, 2007.

### *Ransom Myers:*

On March 27, 2007 Ransom Myers, age 54, died after a five month battle with cancer. Ransom was the Killam Professor of biology at Dalhousie University. In 2006 he was designated by Fortune Magazine as one of the 100 most significant people in the world to watch for his research on the decline of fish populations worldwide. He was prolific writer being published in such prestigious journals as Nature. Do a "Ransom Myers" Google search and you will be amply rewarded.



# UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TACKLE ABUSE OF WETLANDS

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society strives to protect and conserve the Bras d'Or Lakes and its surrounding watershed. Wetlands are a vital part of this environment, serving as a nursery for young aquatic life, a buffer zone protecting the water from erosion and runoff from the land.

They also help de-toxify our water by absorbing and using harmful pollutants. To help raise awareness about the importance of these large swamps, bogs, barrachois and fens, the Stewardship has hired two summer students who will be working on a project that focuses on promoting the conservation and protection of wetlands in the Bras d'Or lakes and watershed.

Ashley Drohan is a Biology student at Acadia University, who will be entering her third year this coming September. She is from Sydney, and has a keen interest in microbiology. Grant Petruskavich, also from Sydney, is an Engineering student at Cape Breton University. His future plans are to study chemical engineering.

During the course of the summer they will be looking for structures that cause impediments to water flow and any contaminants entering the lake. They will analyze this data, draw conclusions about the effects of the condition of the lake on the barrachois's, and determine how these wetlands can be remediated.

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society was formed in August of 1997, and will be celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer. In

recognition of this event they will be having a presentation of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" on July 28<sup>th</sup> in Iona.

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## THE FORMATION OF THE BRAS D'OR STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

By Dr. J.V. O'Brien

When we look back at the formation of an organization like the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society (BSS) there is a tendency to see one or at most a small number of events as being critical. As with similar groups this is only part of the truth.

In the case of the BSS there are pointers going back thirty years or more with a series of consultations, workshops, conferences, task forces reports etc that indicated growing interest in the Lakes and what was happening in and around them.

The most significant of these were two reports by UCCB's Bras d'Or Institute under the leadership of Don Arsenault. The first in 1975 focused on Aquaculture and the second in the early eighties profiled a Management Plan for the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Following these conference followed conference, study followed study, and workshop followed workshop leaving in their wake little but reports gathering dust on shelves. Some years later the Bras d'Or Institute was shut down for lack of funds and remained in limbo for many years. In a government report of 1977 this comment can be found: "Much is studied; little is implemented". Now ain't that the truth and from

government!

In the early nineties there were four events, which had a direct influence on the formation of the Society. The first was the 'Future of the Bras d'Or Lakes' conference held at Beinn Bhreagh in Oct 1991. One of the speakers was Pat Bates who, as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of ECBC, provided funds for that conference. The second was the Baddeck Area Business and Tourist Association (BABTA) sponsored US/UK/CN 'Countrywide Stewardship Exchange' conference at the Inverary Inn in Baddeck in October 1992. This was organized by Henry Fuller then chair of BABTA. The third was the creation of the first private land conservation group in Nova Scotia, the 'Bras d'Or Lakes Preservation Foundation' (BLPF) in 1993 by Governor Blair. And fourth the 'Bras d'Or Lakes Working Group' under the auspices of UCCB and chaired by Rod Carrow with funds provided by ECBC (Pat was still ECBC COO at the time.) Henry was one of the fifteen members of the Working Group.

In January 1995 this widely based group produced a report entitled "Taking Care of the Bras d'Or" that proposed wide ranging changes for the governance of the Bras d'Or Lakes. The then minister of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources Minister, Wayne Adams, shot this fledgling out of the nest before it had flapped a wing. This repudiation of all work done by the 'Working Group' strongly suggested to a number of largely disconnected people that if anything lasting was to be done an advocacy group of some sort was needed a central tenet of which should be financial independence from government both for its formation and continuance.

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I was one of those 'disconnected people'. In March 1996 I circulated a letter to nine or ten people noting the demise of the Working Group and the repeated failure of other such ventures in the past. I suggested: "One way...to reverse this process is to form a (voluntary) organization of interested and concerned people..." If the quantity of responders was poor the quality was not; those who responded were Lloyd Stone and Henry Fuller.

Among other things the latter pointed out there was already an organization in existence, the Bras d'Or Lakes Preservation Foundation (BLPF), of which I was then unaware. Since this was the case with a view to either joining or setting up some kind of joint organization in association with the BLPF, a small diverse group met with the Foundation's Board on few occasions. The BLPF board then included Denne Burchell QC who subsequently joined the BSS board.

It soon became clear we were not going to be able to work together for a number of reasons. Not least because the BLPF was not the type of community based membership organization we had in mind and, as Denne Burchell pointed out, the BLPF was a conservation easement organization with charitable status and not an advocacy group.

We had to make our own way. That this was easier said than done as can be seen from a letter I wrote to Henry on Oct 22, 1996 the opening sentence of which is; "Once again I am on about the formation of some sort of organization for the Bras d'Or."

On Oct 18 1996 the Bras d'Or Preservation Foundation held a public meeting at the Alexander Graham Bell Museum (AGB) in

Baddeck, which Henry Fuller, Lloyd Stone and I attended.

The main objective of this meeting was to educate the public about 'conservation easements', then a new concept in the Maritimes. However, the speaker who got most audience attention was Gilbert Grosvenor who said little about conservation easements but spoke at some length on what he saw as the deterioration in the state of the Bras d'Or Lakes he had noted during his lifetime.

Since many of those who attended had as requested, written their names and addresses in the book provided this list presented an opportunity for us to get in touch with a number of possible future members for our contemplated fledgling organization. On request the BLPF gave us this list and in January 1997 we circulated a letter to all of these individuals with an enclosed questionnaire in which one of the questions was "Would you come to an inaugural meeting of such Association?"

A good number indicated they would.

By the end of that first gathering, among other things the Society had its present name and a date and place for an inaugural meeting. This was held in Baddeck on May 23 1997. By the end of that meeting the BSS had a board Pat Bates, Henry Fuller, Jim Crawford, Lloyd Stone, Simon Chiasson, Albert Marshall, Dan Christmas Jim O'Brien and an executive, Pat Bates Chair, Henry Fuller Treasurer and Jim O'Brien, Secretary. Later Rosemary Burns joined the Board and became Vice Chair. Though various people have served as directors over the years the last four are still directors though Lynn Baechler has been secretary for a number of years.

At that first meeting the membership agreed the Society should become

an official body under the Nova Scotia's Joint Stock Company Act. This application signed by Pat Bates, Henry Fuller, Anna Steele, James Crawford, Lloyd Stone and Jim O'Brien was approved on August 11 1997 and the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society became a legal registered Nova Scotia society.

Those who attended the inaugural meeting were the above plus Julia Crawford, Jim Morrow, Richard Bergman, Chris King, Britt Roscoe, Charlie & Susie Restino and the late Judy Wardwell. Interestingly the minutes of the meeting show that the subject that was to dominate BSS activities over the coming decade, water quality, was already on the agenda. Even if not yet quite up and running the Society had at least taken its few first not so tentative steps.

During the ten years since the Board of Directors has had roughly 100 regular board and 20 open annual meetings; one of the latter at the end of the financial year as required under the Joint Stock Company Act and the other in mid summer mainly for the convenience of non-resident members. At a majority of these biannual meetings there has been at least one speaker and a wide variety of individuals have made presentations to the Board at regular monthly meetings.

For logistical reasons board meetings are usually held in Baddeck (at the AGB) but have also been held at Johnstown, St Peter's, West Bay, Whycocomagh and the Coast Guard College. Despite distance and weather it has been a rare occasion when a Board meeting has lacked a quorum. One member, Tim Lambert, regularly commutes from Lower Sheet Harbour to attend meetings. Besides these Pat Bates, Jim Crawford, Lynn Baechler and others have represented the Society

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at meetings, conferences and symposia across the country and Pat, to use his own word has 'crafted' innumerable letters to politicians, agencies, groups and other significant individuals. Mabel MacEachern has been largely responsible for arranging our tenth anniversary celebration.

Apart from attending symposia and conferences the Society organized and ran a conference at the Gaelic College in Oct of 1999. It helped organize and run a Bras d'Or lakes 'conscious raising' concert in the Baddeck Academy auditorium in 1998 at which many local musicians generously performed without charge.

Through the Green Boat Challenge campaign run by Pat Bates with two students in the summer of 2001, the Society provided impetus for the later enactment of 'Sewage from Boats Legislation'. Board members have kept regular contact with the Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife agency and in particular with its previous able head Charlie Dennis now Chief of the Eskasoni Band.

In 1998 the Society helped fund a group of five Dalhousie students to study and produce a paper 'Survey of Subdivisions'. Jamie Burke a student funded by the Society spent a summer producing an inventory of new and planned dwellings in the watershed.

Following the massive wipe out oysters in the Lakes by the MSX parasite, government assigned a budget of \$ 250,000.00 for an oyster spat reseeding program and chose the BSS as the agency through which this was accomplished. The actual reseeding program was carried out by oyster farmer Jim Crawford who, to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, resigned from the board during this

time. The work was completed on time and under budget.

The Society pushed vigorously for a new batch treatment sewage system (now in place) for Baddeck. The Society has funded an annual scholarship/prize program for High School students for the past three years. Mainly due to the hard work of society treasurer Henry Fuller the Society has produced the biannual 'Blue Heron' for most of its existence. Also, largely due to his good work, the Society has probably the best bank balance of any small voluntary society in Nova Scotia.

When the first Bras d'Or Lakes coordinator (a position created largely from the result of Society pressure) Laurie Sutor was replaced after being caught in the cross fire of an internal Nova Scotia civil service union dispute, the Society provided \$5,000.00 towards her salary so that she could complete her work on the sewage from boats project. Laurie is now a board member.

These are but some of projects and activities in which the Society has taken an active part however the most important achievement of the Society has been I believe to heighten public and government awareness of the vulnerability of the Bras d'Or Lakes and the necessity of looking after their ecological welfare. This the Society has done in a number of ways including playing a major role in the creation of such groups as the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) and Pitu'paq, besides backing up other groups involved in Lake related activities and encouraging all levels of government including First Nations to work together for the benefit of the Lakes.

It would be inappropriate to pretend the BSS has only gone from success to success, the future of the Lakes

is now secure and the Society can metaphorically pack its bags and go home. This is simply not the case. There are still an alarming number of threats to the ecological future of the Bras d'Or Lakes that need to be addressed. These include the continuing existence of straight pipes (pumping sewage directly into Lakes), the absence of set back requirements for new shorefront homes, poor road construction methods, ballast water discharge (still happening despite promised legislation from Ottawa) etc. and perhaps most problematic of all the poor or sometimes total absence of liaison between the twenty plus governing agencies that have jurisdiction over Lakes.

The sad truth is there is still an enormous amount of work for The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society (and others) to do to Protect, Conserve and Restore the Bras d'Or Lakes; the only inland sea in North America, the jewel in the crown of Cape Breton's many natural assets.

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## THE GREAT BLUE HERON

By Bethsheila Kent

The great blue heron, the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society's avian emblem, is Cape Breton Island's largest wading bird. A remarkably patient hunter and strong and graceful flyer, the great blue heron is quickly recognized by even the most reluctant birder. It is a large bird and measures approximately 50" in length in maturity. There is no difference between the plumage of male and female birds and even the juvenile great blue heron early resembles

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its parent birds, lacking only the light chest feathering but graced, instead, with heavily streaked breast and belly. Its long, sharply pointed and rounded bi-colored bill (dark above with a yellow lower mandible) is well suited to probing the shallows for small crustaceans and equally suited to catching the small fish that are the mainstay of its diet. Its long legs are grey in color. In breeding plumage, forehead, sides of neck and throat of both sexes are white; crown and nape plumes black. The great blue heron's neck is mainly an ash-brown in color with two slender black stripes extending along the length and highlighting the shaggy chest. Its back is a distinctive blue-grey from which the species takes its name. In flight, great blue heron fold their long and graceful necks into a tight "s" and their wing beats are slow, methodical and very strong.

The great blue heron is common in summer. Its arrival from its wintering grounds often signals the beginning of our warm weather and although local sightings have been recorded its return as early as April 18, it is more often sighted from mid-May to late September – early October, when it begins its south-bound migration. Usually only individuals or pairs are often observed until mid-August; after that time it is not uncommon to come upon large family groups feeding in the shallows.

The great blue heron is a colonial bird that generally nests in isolated areas. Colonies consist of 15 – 40 nests composed mostly of sticks lined with finer twigs and vegetable matter. Often nests are placed in the upper branches of either evergreen or deciduous trees, sometimes to a height of 70' above ground level. Egg clutch sizes vary greatly, with recordings of as many as seven in

a single nest. The eggs are a pale, bluish-green color and mature in approximately 28 days. Juvenile birds are fledged within 60 days.

The great blue heron will stand patiently in shallow water or move very slowly and methodically, barely causing surface ripples as it moves warily in search of its prey. Its diet consists mainly of small fish, such as blue-green herring and the feral population of rainbow trout that are common to the Bras d'Or Lake. In fact, large fish fauna populations such as these species help support such breeding populations of great blue heron. Great blue heron will also hunt for frogs, aquatic insects and even small mammals.

The great blue heron is not noted as a songbird. In fact its harsh and guttural "gronk", although distinctive, lacks any musical associations whatsoever. Both sexes engage in bill clacking and will sometimes call with short, harsh notes if alarmed.

Great blue heron colonies are relatively short-lived. Typically, an undisturbed colony is productive for 5 – 10 years. Sooner or later, however, the surrounding vegetation that provides protection from both weather and predators is destroyed beneath nests and around nesting sites by the birds' waste, forcing the birds to move, sometimes just a short distance from the original colony if adequate tree cover is present. As great blue heron are very sensitive to human activity, colonies will quickly be deserted if such activity is in close proximity to nesting sites. In such instances, it is known that the birds may travel great distances before establishing another colony. It is thought that colonies once located near to the shores of the Bras d'Or Lake and that were subjected to human interference, were moved far inland by the parent birds.

Historically, Bras d'Or Lake nesting

colonies of great blue heron could be found at Big Farm (Big Baddeck, and within the Bras d'Or watershed), the head of Baddeck Bay, on Kidston Island and at Malagawatch. Today there are no known large colonies of this majestic wader associated with the Bras d'Or Lake but individuals are seen annually and, although their nesting sites may remain a mystery, their continued presence on the Bras d'Or Lake is both welcome and comforting in an era of rapid change and decline of avian species and suitable habitat.

*The Society is most appreciative of Bethsheila Kent's efforts to provide a compelling profile of the magnificent blue heron.*

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## **THE SAFETY OF DRINKING WATER - IT'S ALL OUR RESPONSIBILITY....**

By Sharon Munroe

**A**lmost half of Nova Scotians rely on groundwater from dug or drilled wells for their private drinking water supply.

One way to ensure the safety of your water supply and that of your neighbors is to employ the multi barrier approach to water quality. This approach involves three lines of defense: keeping clean water clean, making it safe and proving it's safe.

Keeping clean water clean means being aware of your activity and the potential impact it may have on your drinking water supply. It may mean not using pesticides around your well, making sure you regularly

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maintain your onsite sewage disposal system and checking your oil tank regularly.

Making it safe means ensuring your well is constructed according to provincial standards by a licensed well driller or digger.

Proving its safe means regularly testing the bacterial and chemical quality of your water supply. Your health and the health of your family, is dependent on clean, safe water. The only way you can be sure your water is safe is to have it tested.

#### Steps to Safe Well Water

- Locate and construct your well properly
  - ◆ The well should be located and maintained so that it is accessible for cleaning, treatment, repair, testing, and inspection over time.
- Protect your well
  - ◆ The best way to protect your well is to prevent contaminants from getting into your well water.
  - ◆ Create a grass buffer around your wellhead.
  - ◆ Slope the area around the wellhead so that the surface water runs away from your well.
  - ◆ Keep sources of E. coli bacteria away from your well. Animal and kitchen waster can contain E. coli. Do not allow animals to defecate or urinate near your well.
- Test your well
  - ◆ Test your well regularly for both the presence of bacteria and chemical quality.
  - ◆ You should test for bacteria every six months.
  - ◆ You should test the chemical quality of your well every 2

years.

- ◆ The best time to test your well is when the possibility of contamination is greatest. This will usually occur after a heavy rain, a large snowmelt, or an extended period of non-use.
- Treat your well
  - ◆ You can use liquid bleach to disinfect your well. The process is called Chlorination or “shock chlorination”. It flushes your well and water system to kill bacteria and other micro organisms.
  - ◆ If there is an on going problem related to faulty well construction or contaminated groundwater, disinfection is only a temporary fix. Have the problem investigated and corrected at the source.

For more information on protecting the quality of your drinking water, please read “A guide for private well owners” published by NS Environment and Labour. It is available on the web at [www.gov.ns.ca/enla/water/drinkingwater.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/water/drinkingwater.asp)

*Sharon Munroe is the Bras d’Or Lakes Coordinator with NS Environment and Labour.*

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## LAND USE ISSUES IN THE BRAS D’OR LAKES WATERSHED

By Matthew Hastings

**T**he Bras d’Or Lake system continues to be threatened by man’s thirst for the all mighty dollar. Numerous waterfront land developments are being created at

an increasing pace. The demand by the “baby boomers” for prime recreational property is at an all time high. What better place to build a summer home than on the shores of the beautiful Bras d’Or Lakes. It is not only residential development that has to be taken into consideration, as there are also several business ventures that have established themselves along the waterfront. What will be the impact on this once pristine area of Cape Breton?

At the present time one of the greatest threats to the lake is shoreline erosion and the effects of siltation. Continued shoreline development translates into more land being cleared, less trees and more erosion. The fish stocks in the lake are already under pressure to survive. With further siltation the future of many species becomes questionable. Based on scientific research it is now known that the water level in the lake is steadily rising as a result of global warming. While the impact is yet to take hold the eventual outcome on waterfront properties could be significant as owners take measures to preserve their valued shoreline against erosion caused by higher tides and stronger “storm surges”. Not only is waterfront property in danger but rare bird species that nest and raise their young along the shore lines of the Bras d’Or Lakes will be in danger of having the beaches they use to camouflage their nests from predators overtaken by the higher water levels. Perhaps the government should create a 100 foot “buffer” zone around certain areas of the lake to ensure future construction is only allowed outside of this restricted area. Regulatory measures such as this would help limit the negative and destructive effects of clear cutting right down

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to the shoreline.

Pollution is also a very major issue relating to land development. Water quality in the lake has long suffered from pollution from a variety of sources with perhaps the greatest source attributed to improper sewage disposal. While sewage treatment processes have improved greatly in the past decade I suggest there remains many older homes with septic systems that do not meet today's standards. Even worse, there are probably some who continue to dispose directly into the lake. Are more regulation, monitoring and enforcement required? The answer is probably "yes", however pressure on provincial government budgets and the public's demand for lower taxes seeming outweighs the need to monitor and control continued pollution. I am sure that the people working for the Nova Scotia Department of Environment are doing the best that they can under the circumstances. My guess is this department is no doubt under staffed and under funded. With all of the environmental issues being faced today this is an area that needs much greater emphasis. Is going "Green" today's flavor of the month or is it a rallying cry that all politicians can no longer afford to ignore.

Limited regulations have allowed a variety of parasites to enter the Bras d'Or Lakes that have devastated some of the native species that once flourished. Over the past several years the MSX parasite has infected the oyster population around the Bras d'Or Lake and has decimated the oyster population. It is believed to have entered the Lakes in the ballast water from ocean going ships that commute the Lake. Another intruder into our lake has been the green crab also

believed to be transported into the Lakes by large ships that discharge their ballast water. There must be more done to stop the barrage of incoming new species that send our ecosystem spinning.

With continued land development along the lake's shoreline public access is perhaps another issue that needs to be addressed. What do "private property" signs mean to us younger Cape Bretoners? Will we be able to enjoy access to the lake in years to come or will we require permission from the many foreign owners to swim in the lake, walk the shoreline and maybe even have a wiener roast? Is anyone interested in our future or will the land be all sold off before we have any real influence over the matter?

Restricted access is one thing; foreign ownership is another land use issue. Are we selling out to foreign interest just to make a quick buck? What does the future hold for the Cape Bretoners like my friends and me when land values are driven through the roof by wealthy individuals from far away places.

The loss of natural habitat is also a concern and an issue that appears to be ignored by all but a few. It seems that with all land development various wildlife species suffer to some degree. With increased human population, most of the larger animals such as our deer and moose are being pushed further away from their traditional roaming areas. Cape Breton has become a refuge to the once scarce "bald eagle". These beautiful birds are now flourishing within the Bras D'Or Lake watershed but what does the future hold for them with continued land development? What a shame it is to think they might loose their established nesting areas, which are now abundant around the lake. Maybe it will not happen but why take the chance that it could. Who will be accountable after the fact?

The old saying, "Don't fool with Mother Nature" is as true today as it was 100 years ago. Maybe certain sections of the watershed should be designated as national wildlife preservation areas that could not be sold off at any price.

One of the biggest problems encountered in protecting the habitat around the Bras d'Or Lakes is that public awareness about the impending danger is virtually non-existent. People living in communities along the Lakes are not well informed regarding the situation. Because of this they are somewhat indifferent about the problems that this very unique environment faces. It is only through new partnerships such as the one signed between Unamaki Institute of Natural Resources and Environment Canada that will lead to protection of the Bras d'Or Lakes ecosystem.

Can the wounds that have been inflicted upon the Bras d'Or Lakes be healed? I think they will, if all parties involved work together to restore the natural balance and see the Bras d'Or restored to its previous pristine condition.

***This essay was submitted for judging by the Society's prize committee. Matthew Hastings is to be congratulated for his effort and for being selected the 2007 winner.***



# Taking a Stand for the Coast

By Jennifer Graham

A summer evening, two friends, a digital camera, a car, muggy in Halifax and sure to be cooler along the coast... ah the coast. Aren't we all drawn to the sea either to cool off or by a more primal desire to return to natal waters? It wasn't purely a summer cruise - we set out on our shoreline tour deliberately



*The poster child for inappropriate coastal development? This coastal wetland complex in East Berlin, Queens County is an example of the kind of ecologically sensitive, low-lying properties currently facing intensifying development pressure..*

looking for examples of the kinds of thoughtless coastal development that is springing up all over the province.

We didn't have to look very far. Our little jaunt around St. Margaret's Bay revealed:

innumerable infilled wetlands, shameless shoreline structures, badly eroding bouldered beaches, humungous waterfront homes with huge ecological footprints, consistent coastal blasting, frighteningly fragmented

habitats, stinky sewage outflows, pernicious private roads that were once private, really pricey real estate, numerous no trespassing signs, and a partridge in a felled pear tree.....

*...cont'd on page 11*

Our summer spirits were dampened by what we saw. So many of these new developments are being built with no consideration of their cumulative impacts on our coastal lands and waters. Has anyone (apart from the ever-vigilant St Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association and other local environmental groups and citizens) considered the carrying capacity of their stretch of coast and how coastal areas can cope with disruption on natural ecosystem processes and functions?

Rampant and unplanned coastal development is not only a grave ecological risk but also have serious economic consequences. Many coastal properties are at risk from accelerated coastal erosion, storm surges, and coastal flooding. In many parts of North American, insurance companies are starting to recognize just how vulnerable these properties are by hiking insurance premiums for coastal properties or refusing to insure them altogether.

The message about the increasing risks of coastal living does not seem to be sinking in in Nova Scotia. Whenever we go anywhere, my friends are getting accustomed to me exclaiming "Oh my God! Did they really build that close to the ocean? What are they thinking? That place will be wiped out with the next hurricane. Who let them do that?"

Who indeed?

The coastal devastation happening around Nova Scotia is only a

symptom of an alarming lack of leadership around coastal issues. This is reflected in the absence of any kind of overarching coastal policy to guide development and land use in our coastal areas.

A lack of provincial direction does not absolve other levels of government or businesses and individuals. In Nova Scotia, all land use planning is a municipal responsibility and less than 50% of them have any kind of municipal planning strategy let alone one that prevents development in vulnerable coastal areas. And lest you think that coastal planning is anti-development, the strongest examples of good coastal planning and restrictive zoning come from the United States bastion of individual freedoms. In New England, citizens can and do get much more involved in determining what their coasts will look like.

A lack of coastal planning at all levels is compounded by weak implementation of existing laws and a lack of leaders willing to stand up for the coast. In a recent glaring example, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour issued a permit to build a road through a large coastal wetland in Queens County to create road access for a housing lot. How can our provincial wetlands policy recognize wetlands as critical ecosystems and yet have the guardians of that policy permit construction on low-lying regularly flooded, ecologically sensitive lands located a stone's (or boulder) throw from the sea? This is indeed

the poster child for inappropriate coastal development.

A little further down the coast, a federal-provincial panel is reviewing the potential impacts of a proposed quarry on the coastline and the surrounding community. The proposed White Point quarry is yet another example of large scale coastal development being proposed without the benefit of an overall framework or plan. Will allowing one company to carve out chunks of Nova Scotia coastline for export to the US set the precedent for further coastal mining? Do these companies pick Nova Scotia only because of our high quality rocks or because of the notable lack of coastal regulations?

Regardless of what the review panel recommends, there is an opportunity for the province to show leadership in halting this quarry. We need a provincial coastal policy framework similar that of other jurisdictions. We also need better municipal land use planning. Mostly, right now we need leadership willing to step up and make these things happen. In doing so, we will be acting as good stewards of Canada's Ocean playground and ensuring that those who can't afford coastal property will be able to go to the beach, the salt marsh, or offshore island. Who will stand up for the coast?

***Jennifer Graham is the Coastal Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre. She likes coastal hikes, long walks on the beach, and coastal planning.***

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**1 800 565 1633**

Our Email: [stewardship@baddeck.com](mailto:stewardship@baddeck.com)

**2007**

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

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

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# Knowledge: the Magnet and the Glue

## PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION TO BRAS D'OR LAKES WORKSHOP

By Dr. Teresa MacNeil, Ph.D.  
October 9, 2003

I am honoured to be invited to speak to this symposium. I am also a little anxious. I worry that what I have decided to say will not meet the planners' expectations.

I was asked to speak about the social and economic impact of the Bras d'Or Lakes. My immediate response was to decline because I had neither the knowledge nor the resources to do that difficult job. As I saw it, one would have to cite facts and figures about the dollar value of fish and shell fish harvests, aquaculture production, shipping traffic, employment rates, recreation and tourism revenues - all attributable to the Bras d'Or. These figures are available for larger jurisdictions (e.g., the Province and DFO region), but that have to be broken-down for the Lake. Besides, some of you in this room have a good sense of some of these values. On the social side, one would want to cite facts and figures about the Lake's role as a supporter of healthy, cohesive communities through education, transportation, information technology, and health services. Again, figures can be ferreted out for individual counties and communities, but not for the Lake region as such. Yet, the symposium planners are right: these are critical data for any discussion that leads to (in the words of the concept paper) "collaborative planning to meet the objectives for the Bras d'Or".

Instead of flatly refusing the invitation, I offered to find someone who could find and analyze the figures for the Bras d'Or. That didn't work either. So, I'm sidestepping the explicit assignment. I understand the need for a solid, comprehensive analysis of social and economic benefits attributable to the Bras d'Or. It is a job that must be done if anyone is serious about setting and achieving economic and social development

goals for the Lake region. In itself, the task of pulling together such an analysis is fundamental, necessary and formidable. It is an imperative for the immediate future.

I will speak about the social and economic implications of the Lake, as I see them. I rely on my background, a background that is not terribly different from those of you who spent a major portion of your life living beside the Bras d'Or. My perspective also comes from years of trying to encourage citizens to be the prime movers, rather than the objects of, social and economic development measures.

With social and economic impact in mind, I will attend to three tasks:

(1) describe the way I see the Bras d'Or Lakes area now; (2) consider the idea of building a Lake Community; and, (3) suggest an approach for continuing to build a culture of collaboration. Knowledge is the thread that runs through my remarks; knowledge to produce the Magnets and the Glue that's necessary for the kind of Lake Community I think is being envisioned during this symposium. To give credit, the terms "magnets" and "glue" come from a 1999 book by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a Harvard business professor. Her concern is about how to thrive locally in a global economy. She sees the magnets as attracting companies and people, with the glue being the stuff in a community that holds the activity and the people together.

### ***How the Lakes Appear Now***

I will begin with the Lakes' economic magnets. Speaking in strictly

commercial terms, they are few. That's not new. In the course of my lifetime the Lake was a place where very few people turned for a living, and then only a marginal living. Now, as was well presented here yesterday and again today, fish and shellfish in the lake face disappointing odds. In short, as matters currently stand, commercial level fishing has minimal economic impact. It is not a magnet. The important question is whether it can become one.

The same can be said for wealth generated by shipping. There was a time when wood was shipped through the Lake, and for course there is gypsum. But, do we even know what revenues are gained from Bras d'Or Lakes shipping?

The absolute beauty of the Lake is undoubtedly a magnet that accounts for some of the revenue gained from tourism and from summer-season residents. We have estimates about the value of the Cabot Trail and the Louisbourg Fortress as magnets for visitors, but do we know what it is for the Bras d'Or? There are likely some figures relating to recreational boating and servicing of all crafts that ply the Lake.

Those of us who live here year-round are able to comment on the pleasure we derive from seeing the lake. Some of us will go so far as to say that without it we would not stay. However, as a community we don't estimate the economic benefit on that magnetic feature of the Lake.

*Knowledge: the Magnet and the Glue  
cont'd on page 2*

Easier to estimate is the economic benefit the Lake provides as a site for research and development. The work being done through the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources and the Bras d'Or Lakes Aquarium and Research Centre; the studies by various agencies and institutions that track or test aspects of the Lake; these are definitely contributing to our economy, although I expect we do not know the dollar figure. I have a hunch that the Lake as a site for research is the aspect that might become its strongest economic magnet.

Turning to look for magnets on the social side, the story is repeated. We do not have a handle on the impact of the Bras d'Or. We are quite certain that our relatively clean and quiet environment attracts and holds people here. Less magnetic is our business climate - if, for no other reason, because of its small size and scattered concentration. Despite apparent difficulties, our education and health care services are of good quality. Yet, I have observed first hand that promising young people who might either remain here or be persuaded to establish their place of work where they can enjoy the ambiance of the lake are discouraged by remoteness in relation to schools, medical services, recreation amenities, and -for many- by the absence of high speed internet services. Said simply, for many talented and courageous young people the lake's beauty does not merit the trade-off of spending large chunks of their own or their children's lives going through the hassle of accessing normal day-to-day services and amenities.

I am not pleased to present this dismal picture of the Lake as a social and economic magnet. Certainly I don't want it to be that way. I believe, however, it is a serious reality that has to be faced if we want the Lake to be a magnet for economic and social development. If the Lake is to be a

magnetic unit for development the very first task is to be able to describe what that unit now looks like, using indisputable facts and figures.

The Glue part is more encouraging - that's our physical and social infrastructure. There is no denying we live in a pleasantly safe environment where strong family and community support is a hallmark. Yesterday we heard about the very impressive range of activity being carried out to enhance the Bras d'Or. Through the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) and the Pitu'paq partnership there is evidence that our respective levels of government are paying coherent attention to the Lake. This symposium is itself generating glue to hold pieces together as it fashions the Lake into an integrated unit. In the words of the concept paper, it's about "increasing the efficiency of existing players in the Bras d'Or." What the existing players are doing is wonderful. Yesterday we celebrated that fact.

Recently, I had the pleasant experience of gathering representatives of these groups - and a few additional interests - to form a steering committee to explore the prospect of achieving special UNESCO designation for a portion of the Lake (the canyon in St. Andrew's channel). Although that exercise has only begun I am confident about the willingness and ability of that volunteer committee to see what can be made of the opportunity. Taken together, all of these initiatives are evidence of the high quality glue being produced to begin holding the Lakes together as a development unit. Through research and measures to deal with various forms of pollution they are already fostering social and economic benefits.

Encouraging and significant as these initiatives are, they still do not supply enough glue. If the twenty-five Issues listed in the concept paper are valid, they point to the need for enormous economic and social infrastructure. That summary of main issues in the

Bras d'Or lakes (reported in Appendix I) was compiled from existing reports and is essential for planning. It covers a very broad gamut and, as Garth Bangay told us, the issues are to be validated through a consultation process.

This brings me to the essence of the matter. The extensive work that is being done is both necessary, laudatory, and must continue. Furthermore, it now needs to reach out and gradually include more people. The general population living within the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed does not see itself as a community. That understanding has yet to be built.

So, for whom are these "the issues"? Certainly no one in this room would dispute them. However, they are not significant as bases for action until at least a large portion of the population understands - and acknowledges - them as genuine, problematic concerns, as distinct from a list of general headings. That depth of understanding comes only after there is opportunity to relate to facts and circumstances in terms of their own experience. Only then might they be motivated to work with you, to support you as their leaders, as you take action on those issues. It's a long-term job of human development that will lead, in turn, economic and social development. It's a job we don't do very well and I want to encourage this symposium to think very deeply as these issues are being validated. Surely the goal is not just to stir up government action. Better to first build the capacity of many people living around the Bras d'Or Lakes to adopt a vision of a community whose centre is the Lakes - with assistance from government.

It is easy to acknowledge some of the very tangible physical issues such as roads, electricity, sewage disposal, communication services, education and training. We know quite a lot about those, what they cost and why they are not improving the way we

would like. Less easy to see is the need for social infrastructure to solve problems. That's the element that will enable us to find the data and weigh to alternatives to the point of knowing precisely what has to be done and how to do it. This is the glue that brings people together systematically around common concerns with ample information and opportunity to take part in difficult decisions. It is a learning process for everyone. Right now that glue (i.e., the ability to solve problems) is in short supply. More of it will come as various groups proceed to establish a Lake community; as they learn to engage effectively in issues about which they care deeply.

### **Building A Community**

This symposium is a major step in the direction of building a lake community. This assembly of leaders already has a lot of influence over what might become of the Lake. I am very hopeful about you. You know already that it takes enormous trust to work together on common objectives. It is hard to be sure who is in it for the long haul. After all, we have many examples of coalitions breaking down as soon as a brighter option appears. I think, for example, of how some entities within Strait Highlands RDA dropped-out over time to pursue the interests of their particular entity.

As you determine the next steps for developing collaborative management in the Bras d'Or Lakes you will likely select a few issues that will get people thinking about the Lake as a unit for economic and social analysis. Pitu'paq caught our attention last winter with its project relating to dumping of sewage from boats. Although a relatively small issue, it's very controversial. The Stewardship Society relentlessly pushes at the issue of water quality, raising awareness of the sources of contamination. The Preservation Foundation established an exhibition on the Ecology of the Bras d'Or. These and the other important measures we

heard about yesterday are still not sufficient to convince a majority of residents of a need for change, not to mention of their responsibility to get behind change. These measures are raising awareness. But there is a long road between awareness and changed behavior.

A Lake Community would have residents who know what the Lake really looks like. They will know, for example, the results of the survey of domestic sewage disposal systems. They will know in graphic terms about the negative effect on the Lake of badly managed landscapes, be that from woods operations, site clearance, gravel pits ... They will know how polluted the lake is where they live, and why. They will come to appreciate that individual householders have to take responsibility for remedial measures with, where necessary, financial assistance to do so. They will know the sources of contamination of the Bras d'Or and what has to be done to stop them. They will know which ones are the more promising directions to go if the Bras d'Or Lake is to contribute much more than it does now to the social and economic well-being of the community.

When a population is broadly informed about the Lake it will assist you, the leaders, to move forward. A population won't do that without very specific information, sometimes - information they have helped to gather, information that is openly and deliberately shared by you, in a timely way and without candy coating. A Lake community that has the glue you provide through honest disclosure will enable you to get things done far more quickly than now.

This brings me back to the list of issues. Taking the one on youth for example, I absolutely agree that the need to stop youth out-migration is an issue. What are the facts about that issue? It's a major concern in all of rural Canada. If a rigorously selected youth group were given a well designed task of examining that issue, they themselves will end up

understanding the implications for themselves and for the community of their decisions to leave or to stay. Presumably they would enable the whole population to see what youth are confronting as they decide to stay or leave. Then there will be some knowledge of what, if anything must change. My point here is that each issue requires probing, preferably probing with the help of those who are key to the issue. That kind of approach to each issue will help to build a Lake community.

Less than a week ago I spent a long, hard day - nearly eleven hours - at the Social Science and Humanities Research Council in Ottawa. It's one of the granting councils for Canada's universities. I was one of nine adjudicators recruited as volunteers from across the country who had just slogged through thousands of pages of tightly crafted words. We had read 38 research proposals to be carried out by partnerships between universities and communities. About half of them will be funded to the tune of a million dollars each. I mention this because the experience told me in no uncertain terms that the "science" of social and economic development is at a very primitive level here and in western society generally. You see evidence everywhere, not least in Iraq where it was known how to destroy a régime, but not known how to foster development of a far better replacement.

### **Building a Culture of Collaboration**

You look forward to building a culture of collaboration. This symposium is helping you to figure out how to do that. If you wanted to build, for example, a super computer, there would be no shortage of tested models and competent advisers. The same is not true for building a culture

of collaboration. The knowledge of how to do that is not well tested. There is no reliable prototype that you can adapt to fit this situation. It is a unique situation to which some general principles can be applied. That in itself is a critical point: agreeing on general principles. For example, you might choose to get up to date information about the social and economic impact of the Lakes by securing funding, hiring a firm to do the job and accepting their report. Or, you might use the need for data as an opportunity for interest groups to learn about some of the challenges of creating a Lake community. Some funds will still be required for them to gather the data with a little help from experienced researchers. That way you will end up with groups of local experts. For example, the Tourist association, or the union of construction workers, or ... will come to know how the Bras d'Or Lakes impacts their industry. You might choose to employ the principle of having people learn about the Lake by being part of the research process. As in the youth example, consider the potential effect of having a range of interest groups involved in the question of what value the Lake has for them.

Why not be at the front of the pack and acknowledge that the very process of developing and executing a collaborative plan for the Bras d'Or is an undertaking that itself can be developmental? I say "the front" because I believe that Canada is rapidly recognizing the need to produce knowledge about building a better society. Thus, a design to achieve a Bras d'Or Lake community within a culture of collaboration is itself a research area; one that can be carefully spelled-out and, subsequently qualify for funding through agencies which are now very concerned about learning how to build modern, democratic, civil society.

As you approach the job I want to

suggest a few questions whose answers have to power to attract the attention and support of a host of interests, including funding agencies.

Why do you want to build a culture of collaboration? In terms of the Bras d'Or Lakes, why is collaborative management necessary?

What is it about the Lake that has to be changed/maintained and where is the evidence?

You know at least some of the answers. The challenge is to catch the attention and

Support of residents to help them learn and to help you achieve your development goals.

How do you bring conflicting views into some kind of productive conclusion? That's the toughest one of all, so that you don't end up with factions of winners and losers.

I will conclude by revisiting a few points I have already made:

- (1) Surprisingly little is known about the social and economic impact (actual and potential) of the Lakes. That will be remedied as work begins on the list of issues that have already been identified; working in a way that creates a lake-centered community where a large portion of the population knows what it takes to build the community it wants.
- (2) In the world of hard science questions are quite easily generated and suitable sources to investigate them are relatively easy to find. In the world of social science, questions are considerably more difficult to isolate but, once specified, may be investigated very fruitfully with the help of those who care about the question.
- (3) I do not mean to downgrade the urgency of the hard science questions. Indeed, I look forward to the prospect of having the Bras d'Or serve as a laboratory

for important aquatic research; that is a potential bright spot for future development - a potential magnet. But I also urge you to think as well about the Bras d'Or as a laboratory for testing approaches to economic and social development by engaging those for whom the issues are significant to discover ways to transform their social, cultural, and political circumstances. That is potential glue.

Finally, I have taken a rather long view of the social and economic impact of the Bras d'Or Lakes, emphasizing the need to treat the Lake as a unit for analysis with respect to its natural resources and those who live within the Lake's watershed area. I have stressed that building a culture of collaboration to achieve a Bras d'Or Lakes community requires digging much more deeply into the minds and hearts of the general population. It is not a sell job; it's a learning job.

In the end it is all about knowledge; knowledge to create effective magnets for wealth production, and knowledge to create all the glue that's necessary to bond together the people who will become convinced that the Bras d'Or Lakes is the precious centre of their community. This symposium is a giant step in that direction. I hope you leave here ready to take the next giant step.

1 Roseabeth Moss Kanter, World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy 13

***The society has reprinted Dr. Teresa MacNeil's fine article, as we consider it still to be an excellent summary of a well thought out synopsis of the current sentiment about the Bras d' Or lakes and its watershed.***