

All Along the River

FALL 2012

NASHWAAK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION INC.

ISSUE THREE



At the heart of the matter...the simple act of planting trees may be one of our most powerful actions



New Brunswick
Nouveau Brunswick
Your Environmental Trust Fund at Work!

The Year in Review:

A different approach: reaching out

The Environmental Trust Fund, from which we get the bulk of our funding, has been encouraging organizations like ours to make plans and processes for succession, to broaden our contacts with other watershed and environmental groups, and to seek, where possible, funding from other sources. It is with these things in mind that we have expanded our approach to riparian restoration and tree planting. We have included new people, as with the forestry students who gave us a day in October, and the Fredericton High students (members of that school's Environmental Club) who pitched in in September with other Nashwaak Watershed Association (NWAI) members to out plant trees on the McLean Flats. We have cooperative programs in the active planning stages for Stanley High and Nashwaak Elementary schools. At the nursery, we are looking into supplying other watersheds with planting stock and encouraging them in the development of small nurseries at other locations to grow

herbaceous plants and bushes on sites better suited than ours.

New ideas, and programs to boot

We have had some very positive meetings in Fredericton to test interest in an idea to create a new "linear park" which might serve as the beginning for an entire system of green forested areas running through the city. We plan more tree planting in that area, and establishing an experiential learning centre in that location as well, similar to that developing with the Nashwaak and Stanley schools. The Linear park concept takes advantage of the ability of forested areas within cities to improve air quality, neighborhood safety, flood prevention, as well as creating recreational and substantial economic opportunities.

We will be meeting with members of hotel and hospitality businesses to underline and explore those opportunities.

Issues we are working on

We still have no satisfactory explanation from the Dept. of the

Env. on the question of water classification. No promises to complete it before the data is obsolete and in our opinion, no way, therefore, to protect the river. Furthermore, given the view in Ottawa regarding the environment primarily as an obstacle to development, the outlook is likely to remain bleak until some faces change, or everybody returns to their home planet.

Some things you should know...

Issues that are on the horizon and may be of interest to many of you (more info on these topics and others on our website):

- ☞ "Salmon Wars", the documentary by Silver Donald Cameron, : alarming facts about the business of fish farming and it's effect on wild salmon populations.
- ☞ The province's decision on Preserved Natural Areas (or PNAs)
- ☞ shale gas health risks
- ☞ water classification

We invite your comments and discussions on Facebook.

What Has Happened to the Fish?

In 2010 we saw 2000 grilse pass by the fish counter on the Nashwaak and some thought cautiously that there could be the beginnings of a recovery. Fishers were catching and releasing salmon (unofficially) and they were asking when the river would open for catch and release.. In 2011 we counted 1000 grilse. This year there were 17 grilse.

This is out of all proportion

to counts from rivers in northern New Brunswick, and represents a shocking year over year decline. Here in the south, fish farms dot the Bay of Fundy.

In the mid 1990s an increase in sea lice

from fish farms in the Bay of Fundy coincided with a serious decline in salmon, while a spectacular recovery coincided with the virtual eradication of sea lice as fish farms applied SLICE, a pesticide very effective against them, and which almost eliminated sea lice in salmon farms after 2000.

Sea lice then developed a resistance to SLICE and we are now witness to the greatest decline of a wild salmon population in history.

Salmon farms accept sea lice as a

manageable risk at levels of forty egg producing lice per fish, and can hold populations as high as seven hundred thousand farmed salmon in cages. Salmon farms generate massive numbers of sea lice at these levels which drift into the water column where they meet seaward migrating smelt in the spring. Wild salmon smolt mortality approaches 100% when they acquire as few as nine or ten lice.

For comments and questions:

Please contact us at www.nashwaakwatershed.ca

Putting the “Public” in Public Engagement



Above: The beginnings of what may become the largest tungsten/molybdenum mine outside of China, a \$400 million project... You know anything about that.?

The Sisson Project, we are told, is planned as a very large open pit mine, offering promises of jobs for people in rural New Brunswick and revenue for the cash starved Province. Jobs and money in the coffers are both good things and no one could dispute that.

As with the shale gas proposals, much is promised (money and jobs) and we are told that regulations will preserve the parts of the province not fractured or hauled away in trucks. Details are scarce.

I am a not fan of dismissing any idea out of hand. In my line of work, a bad idea followed to its logical conclusion, goes away by itself and no one gets called a nasty name because the best solution is the one that survives examination.

In order for that to take place, though, we need clarity and an understanding of the project and its consequences, good and bad. Add them up and see how it comes out.

What I am struggling with on this mine is the fact that no one seems to know a thing about what is easily the largest undertaking in the history of the area. The ore in the ground may be billions of dollars of resource value, but we have no inkling.

How then do we allow the idea to follow to a logical conclusion

without information? How can we support something with so little information?

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) told us that there is a legislated requirement for public engagement, just not so much that the general public needs to measurably understand the project. Public engagement, they say, is the responsibility of the proponent Northcliff Resources Ltd.

Northcliff has largely restricted their efforts to answering questions of individuals but so far have not engaged the public in public: certainly never in open forums where all might hear at once all the ideas and questions presented. We feel a community must be engaged as a community, in spite of the inconvenience.

We would like to know how you feel, what you know about the mine, and what your future should be with or without a mine. If you have questions or comments we would like to hear them and any other ideas you have. Links to the Department of Environment and Local Government and to Northcliff Resources Ltd. are on our website at:

www.nashwaakwatershed.ca

Volunteers

Some people's lives

rest only with their family, friends and their private interests. Others see value in contributing to society in hundreds of ways, private and public in addition to family, home and business responsibilities

In spite of ourselves, most of us

lead a gifted existence in a wonderful country. So gifted, in fact that we sleepwalk through much of our lives, only barely aware of what runs the infrastructure that we use so casually, while complaining of the wait, the snow and the weather. The land is rich and gorgeous - generous to gardeners, fishers and hunters and full of opportunities for anyone imaginative enough to try them. Nothing to worry about but the rent or mortgage, and the odd toothache.

All of that is changing.

In large chunks of legislation, with thousands of pages of mind numbing legal text that no one has fully read, the federal government is systematically dismantling our ability to examine its decisions. Doing so, they have eliminated the positions of some of the world's most eminent scientists. They have reduced our ability to get information in the information age while we are watching the whole thing happen, passively, scratching our heads and waiting for dinner. Just another day in paradise.

Now is not a time for watching

but it might be the time to think about the world we leave for our children. Can we leave its care to the few good hearted and overtaxed people who are volunteering? Can we trust it to a government that has no science to support its decisions?

I don't need you to agree with me or the government, but I do think anyone sitting at home watching passively has effectively voted to ship this grand country up the creek. When your grandchildren ask what you were doing when the country got sold, you can tell them, "waiting for dinner".

Bet they put your picture over the mantle for that one.

Send comments to Paul McLaughlin through our website at:

www.nashwaakwatershed.ca

Moving forward.... the nursery becomes a learning centre



Nursery manager, David McLaughlin, with Dr. Shawn Dalton of Thrive Consulting, have made successful inroads with the teaching staff at Stanley High School and Nashwaak Valley Elementary School with promising results.

People to thank

No work gets done without volunteers and I have been humbled by those people who have come to change the world, a little bit at a time.

Kent Fackenthall, who I have laid eyes on only three times but whose work on the website and Facebook pages has changed that world, and sooo much for the better.

Andrew Ross has been patient to a fault while we called his cherry burl urn a bird's eye bowl, and all that after having donated in order to provide an incentive for new members to join the Association.

Elizabeth Sheppard and crew from FHS, Margo Sheppard, our own interns Suzanne MacKinnon and Amy Bartlett, Tom Beckly from UNB and all his students, Shawn Dalton of Thrive Consulting, Sandra Estey and her Ma for biscuits, Jimmy the yank, David McLaughlin for commitment and hard work, and patience (that comes up a lot), Diane Fraser, a board member and the doer of all things

necessary but crappy, Amy Fraser, and Buck, who made burgers. Monique LeBlanc, without whom nothing would get done, Bill Gammon and Ruth Gammon, and all the others I have forgotten, for a season in which we all changed the world, just a little bit.

We on the board of the NWAI

have been working on the establishment of a strategic plan for the future and on building a group of dynamic bright people to run the place in that future.

Please join us at the AGM and think about joining us in that work.

Annual General Meeting
Wednesday Nov. 28, 2012 at the
Nashwaak Valley Elementary School
7pm to 9:30
election of officers, planning,
discussion of issues from the floor

Speaking with one voice

by Paul McLaughlin, President



We are judged by our numbers

I have been the face and the often too loud voice of the Nashwaak Watershed for a few years now, and have learned a school yard full of things I couldn't have imagined before. I have met and been impressed by the people along the river who have showed up or spoken up, cleaned up, and one or two who told me to shut up.

But I am certain there are more of you out there, able bodied, capable and interested.

To be effective as a voice, an organization must be able to demonstrate substantial membership numbers and in that regard, we have been lagging a bit. We are reaching out into the community to both seek and offer

help and advice in an effort to create a sense of place within that community, by actions that create change.

Even if you can do nothing physical or have no time, we would ask that you join the Association as a member, knowing that membership itself can be a statement of support for action and a positive means of contributing.

We have an increasingly active website, a presence on Facebook, and by e-mail and newsletters such as this, we can keep you informed and able to participate in decisions and events occurring along your river.

Please take the time to fill out the form below or go to our website at www.nashwaakwatershed.ca



Working together for common interests is an ages old means of building a sense of community and having fun at the same time

Become a member and supporter of the Nashwaak Watershed Association

Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc.
P.O. Box 314, Station "A"
Fredericton, NB, E3B 4Y2

E-Mail nashwaakwatershed@hotmail.com

The NWA is an affiliate of the New Brunswick Salmon Council and the Atlantic Salmon Federation and discounted membership fees are available to NWA members. All monies go to preservation and enhancement of the Nashwaak Watershed.

Name: _____ Please enclose your \$10.00 dues.

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ email : _____

I want to be advised of your next meeting: YES NO

I want to volunteer to: Feed fish Plant trees Administer the Assoc. Other (specify)

Comments: