

Git'er done... continued from p. 3

happy and sad. Happy that someone has finally said it. And sad that it took so long and so much prodding and we still don't have results. But those words also make us hopeful. We are hopeful that a new government, the Ombudsman's nudge, and encouragement from you – fellow lovers of our River – will bring about the will we need now to see this through. The hard work is complete and now the stroke of a pen will git'er done!

Next spring, we would love to send you an invitation to a ribbon-cutting ceremony where we celebrate this win over two decades of work to take care of our Nashwaak. Consider sending an RSVP to the Minister of Environment Brian Kenny (brian.kenny@gnb.ca), indicating that you would love to attend.

You can read more about the Water Classification Program at our website www.nashwaakwatershed.ca

—Stephanie Merrill



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write to The Nashwaak Watershed Association, P.O. Box 314, Station "A" Fredericton, NB, E3B 4Y2. Information is also available on our website at <http://www.nashwaakwatershed.ca>

With thanks for continued support



Your Environmental Trust Fund at Work

Nashwaak Watershed Association ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, November 26 at 7:00 PM
at the
Marysville Heritage Centre
11 McGloin St, Fredericton, NB E3A 4J9

GUEST SPEAKERS

David Coon, newly elected leader of the Green Party of New Brunswick will speak on economic opportunities in a sustained ecology

Josh Noseworthy will speak on floodplain forest ecology

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC • ALL ARE WELCOME

Connect with us



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WaterWays



Fall
2014

NEWSLETTER OF THE NASHWAAK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION, INC.

Where do we go from here?

It's your Watershed. Its future is in your hands.
Join. Volunteer. Speak. Lead.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS! Your membership helps us with programs, projects and activities to inform, educate and advocate for the well-being of the Nashwaak Watershed. We welcome your support! The Nashwaak Watershed Association is an affiliate of the New Brunswick Salmon Council. Donations are welcome.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please advise me of the date & location of the next NWA meeting Please notify me of volunteer opportunities

Please complete and mail to:
Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc.
P.O. Box 314, Station "A" Fredericton, NB E3B 4Y2

Or become a member online at www.nashwaakwatershed.ca/membership/

President's Report

For the past four or five years we have focussed on the fostering of native species for planting along the river as part of what is known in the business as "riparian restoration". We have had success with the growing of some five to seven thousand trees, in stages from seedlings to almost caliper size trees of six feet or more.

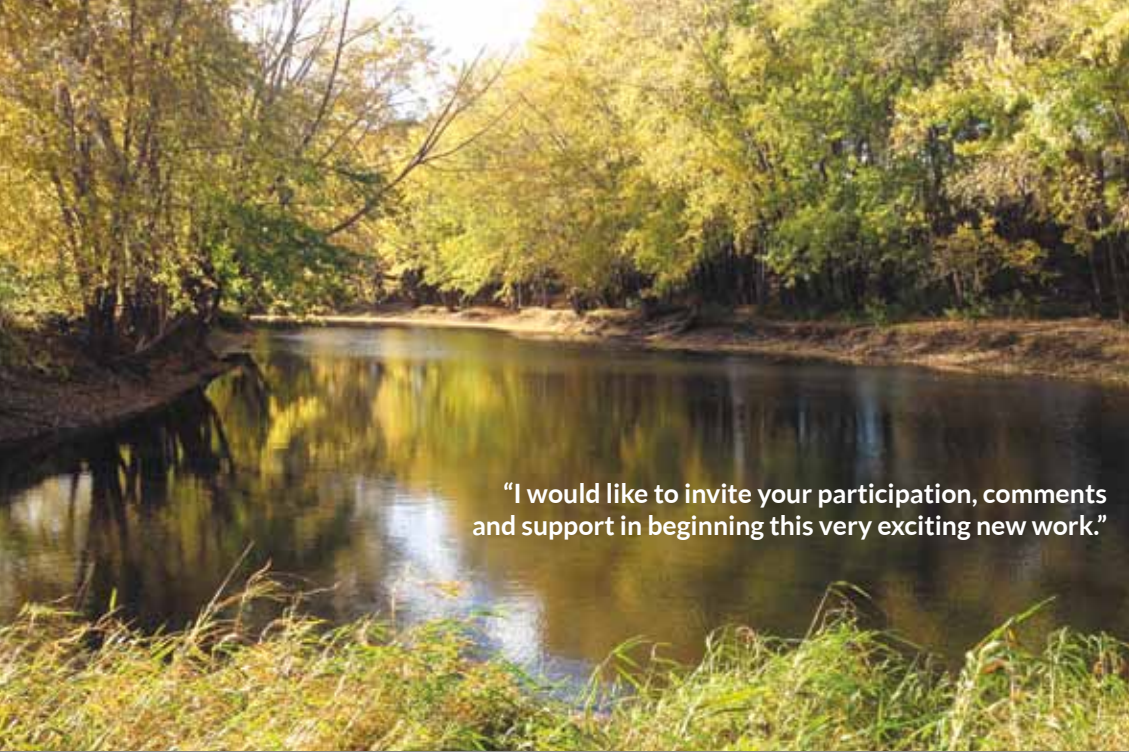
Over the past three years, we have out-planted several acres of floodplains with some two thousand trees from our nursery, and more from stock we received from the Canadian Forestry Service. In this, we have had a survival rate well over 90% up to now on all these plantings.

On water classification, as Stephanie Merrill mentions in her piece, we have been, and remain, a leader in working to see this completed. We continue to

work on developing as a land trust as discussed during last year's AGM. This file will be lead by Josh Noseworthy, a board member with experience in this field. The Greenway or linear park concept is still on the horizon, dovetailing very well with the land trust aspirations.

In outreach and education, we have program ideas at work at the elementary school level to allow children a chance to do a comparative analysis of forest types

continued inside ▶



"I would like to invite your participation, comments and support in beginning this very exciting new work."

Did you know that floodplain forests, such as the Silver Maple communities along the Nashwaak, are one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world? And did you know that we still have some?

These forests generally occur in large river valleys where seasonal flooding enriches the soil each year, making them wetlands as well as forests. Like most other floodplain forests, the lush groves of Silver Maple along the Nashwaak are incredibly rich with other plants and animals. They also provide us with a suite of free naturally occurring benefits **including:**

EROSION CONTROL

Large Silver Maples act as shields against ice scouring that would otherwise erode away our riverbanks. This also keeps sediment out of the river, which could impact fish populations by smothering eggs, decreasing their visibility and feeding.

FLOOD PREVENTION

Mature Silver Maple forests absorb and release tremendous amounts of water, which significantly contributes to protecting our properties against flooding.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Silver Maple forests are critical habitat for a whole variety of wildlife. The list of plants and animals that depend on Silver Maple forests for shade, a place to live, food and more, is long, and includes many rare and endangered species in our region such as ... name one well known one?. They also provide critical nursery grounds for a variety of fish species during the flood season.



OK. We've established that Silver Maple forests are pretty important, so why are they threatened? Well, since the soil is rich, floodplains were recognized as great places for growing food, which resulted in widespread land clearing for agriculture in the past. The fertile lands along the Nashwaak River were no exception, and much of the historic extent of Silver Maple forest has been cleared away. What's left are fragmented "islands" of Silver Maple forest in between old fields, residential development and a variety of commercial land uses.

Of course, they say that hindsight is 20/20, and since we now know that intact floodplain forests play a critical role in maintaining healthy river systems, we can take the right steps to ensure they stick around. The good news is that we have some great remaining examples of Silver Maple forest along the Nashwaak, and what's more, some wonderful opportunities to restore this

unique forest community. Given the benefits of simply letting it exist, it's really a win-win situation, for both wildlife and people.

The Nashwaak Watershed Association has an active and successful program to help make sure that our floodplain forests are restored so that they can continue to provide those services to our community and the wildlife that depend on them. Each spring, summer and fall, we have many opportunities for you to get out and help plant! Let us know if you would like to join us!

Let's git'er done!

I bet you've been swimming and fishing and paddling in the Nashwaak with the assumption that we have basic waterway protections since our waters are so fundamental to why we love this place.

And why would you think otherwise? That should just be taken care of! And it is supposed to be, in the form of the Water Classification program which sets standards for maintaining water quality for us, for fish, for industries.

The program has been highlighted by government as one of our key water protection tools; the program continues to be funded through grants to groups like ours from the Environmental Trust Fund; and the legislation to enforce it is actively on the books.

That's about the extent of it though. In the years since the Water Classification Program – a program actually initiated by the Province – came into being, 19 rivers have been submitted for protection under our *Clean Water Act*, not a single river has been approved, including our Nashwaak.

We were out in front actually. We

were one of the first groups who completed the work we were told to do – we collected the water samples, bug samples, had community meetings and submitted the application to entrench the standards of our waters in legal protection for the future. That was in 2003. We've been patient, we've asked questions, we've had meetings, we've done all we could reasonably do to follow through on our end of the program.

In February of 2012, we sought the advice of the Office of the Ombudsman who has the authority to look into matters of government administration – asking the question: "is government following their own processes, or not?" We outlined the work we've done and the disappointment we've felt. The Ombudsman heard the passion we have for doing all that we can for our River. In August 2014, the Ombudsman released a report about the Water Classification Program. In short it says:

the Water Classification Program and accompanying regulation is "illusory", "a mirage", akin to "a smoke detector without batteries", "misleading to observers", and "provides no protection."

Wow. Those are powerful words from such an authority. They make us both

Second try... *continued from cover*

by walking in them, photographing what they see, and writing about their thoughts and feelings. Their photographs will be uploaded to an interactive map they can view in the classroom. The best of the photos and stories can be bound into a coffee table book for permanent viewing and sharing. The idea is that they can have pictures and write stories about the different forest types they experience. From this they will be able to think critically about the forests they are going to one day inherit.

As an organization, we continue to struggle with busy schedules, late filings, and lost opportunities typical of a volunteer NGO, but on the up side we did complete a strategic plan for our long term vision, and lastly, our board is evolving as an active, intelligent and creative group of individuals both invested in the watershed and capable of managing its future. I believe its future is full of opportunity and promise, should we all wish to make it happen.

The riparian program that has been our focus for almost a decade is being reexamined in order to view the ecosystems in immediate proximity to the river as they existed before European settlement. Josh Noseworthy has a short article on floodplain forest ecosystems, one of the country's rarest and most productive such systems.

Because of this we intend to concentrate a great deal of effort toward the re-establishment of this forest type wherever it had naturally existed, and working with whomever we can to do so. It is our hope that using this as our central theme will allow us to roll riparian restoration, developing as a land trust and the greenway, or linear park concept, into a single integrated undertaking.

This is a program with a long timeline. Housed within it are a host of other opportunities to interest and engage all those young and hungry minds in work of great consequence, obvious benefit and lasting effect.

I would like to invite your participation, comments and support in beginning this very exciting new work.

Having attracted this new talent to our board I think we, as a community, owe it to ourselves and to our future to provide them with the means and support necessary to truly influence the arc of human activity within our watershed.

I, for one, trust them to do a great job.

—Paul McLaughlin
NWA President