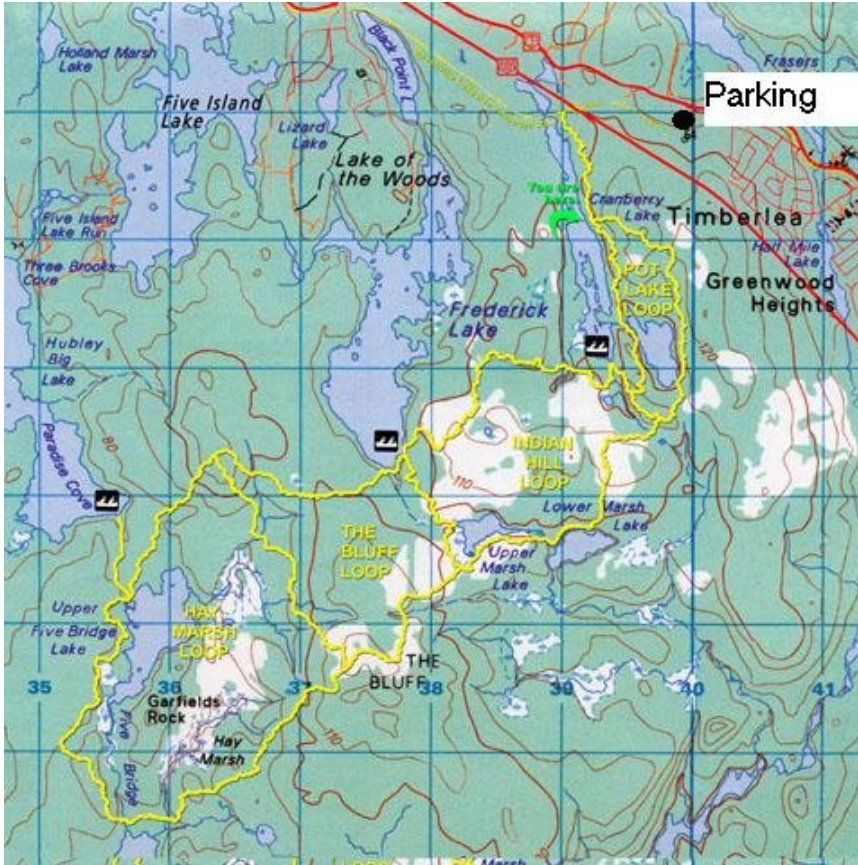




WRWEO WATCH (Vol. 6, No. 1)

July 2009

Newsletter for the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization



A map of the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail

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WRWEO WATCH began in the fall of 2002 to inform our members and the wider community of the work of WRWEO and the environmental issues it faces and to solicit feedback from the community. The last issue was in the spring of 2008 (Vol. 5, No. 1). All the issues from Dec/2007 onwards are available on our website at www.wrweo.ca. We hope that our members will raise questions by email, phone, or letter in response to the notes below.

To Contact WRWEO: Go to the website www.wrweo.ca and click on “contact us”. You can also write or call directly to Richmond Campbell (co-founder of WRWEO) at 876-7847 (home) or 489-0457 (cell), or any of the other board members listed on the website; write to WRWEO, Unit 14, Box 300, 3650 Hammonds Plains Road, Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia B3Z 4R3.

New Board – March 25, 2009

Newly elected to the Board at the Annual General Meeting on March 25, 2009, are David Patriquin, who was also elected to serve as Co-Chair of WRWEO, and Mark Reed. Seven other Board members were re-elected: Richmond Campbell (Co-Chair), Brain Saulnier (Treasurer), Barbara Klass (Secretary), Paul Berry, Hildi Konok, Tim McGee, and Jim Muir. David Patriquin, who also chairs the Halifax Field Naturalists and is on the executive of the Halifax Wild Flora Society, is recently retired as Professor of biology at Dalhousie University, where he taught and researched environmental issues. Mark Reed, who is a research chemist recently moved to the area, has a special interest in The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail and has volunteered to represent WRWEO in working on capital trail projects on the Halifax Regional Trails Association.

Membership Renewal

The focus of work is shifting from the Board to the membership. Following the AGM, we had an almost two-fold increase in membership, now approaching 60 in total. This was accomplished simply by our asking old members whether they would like to renew. There are some forty old members since 2006 still to be contacted.

New Work Structure

Significantly we have changed the everyday mode of operation of WRWEO in ways that are far more efficient yet still are consistent with the mission statement and by-laws. The most notable change is that the Board is now meets only four or five times a year to discuss general policy and make financial decisions. The day to day operation of WRWEO is handled by committees, such as those dealing with water quality issues and the trail, and members who serve in groups are often not on the Board. Our hope is the organization will achieve a much boarder base of active support than it has had in the past.

Website Renewal

With the generous help of two members, John Bignell and David Patriquin, WRWEO now has a much more responsive, informative, and up-to-date website, which is now managed by David Patriquin. Please check it out. The URL is the same: www.wrweo.ca (or just: wrweo.ca). It is also accessible at blufftrail.ca. New features are posted almost daily. Learn about the small population of mainland moose on the Chebucto Peninsula or about the presence of Broom Crowberry, which is found in Canada only in Nova Scotia and flourishing on The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail. Learn about upcoming nature walks. Your comments are always welcome. Visit us!

Annual Fishing Derby and Nature Walk

On Saturday June 6 we held the ever popular annual fishing derby in a new location. We have hosted this event for more than ten years but before it was always held on Stillwater Pond, which is located outside our watershed. This year we wanted to hold the event within the watershed and next to



Broom Cowberry on the Bluff Trail - male flowers in foreground. Photo on April 30, 2009.

the trailhead for The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail, which

always celebrates International Trail Day on the same day as the derby. Our plan was to change the focus of the derby from catching as many fish as possible to learning about conservation issues regarding fish (with demonstrations of “catch and release”, fly casting, fly tying and fun quizzes about the relation of land and water in affecting fish habitat). Unfortunately the weather was very rainy, which can be good for fishing, but less than the usual number showed up. Most of those who came, including lots of youngsters, had a good time. The nature walk had to be postponed until the

next day and some persons with disabilities had difficulty accessing the fishing spot because of the 10 minute walk between the parking lot and the trailhead. There were also reports of fish being poached on the night prior to that day when fishing is permitted without a license. Clearly we will need to review these issues in planning for next year's derby/nature walk events. Many thanks to Barbara Klass, Dave Patriquin, Hildi Konok, and Jim Leeshanok for helping out and a special thanks to Tim McGee for making the derby possible.

Sheldrake Lake Aeration Project

This spring, we resolved some of the compressor problems involved in pumping oxygen into the deeper zones of Sheldrake Lake, a project begun eight years ago to improve fish habitat. The residents at Sheldrake have been central to the project, contributing their time and expertise. Also, Dr. Robert Chambers, a retired biochemist living nearby who is lifetime member of WRWEO and has had a continuing interest in this project in particular, has spent countless hours testing over the years and this spring tested on a daily basis. We now have copious data going back to 1991. We have also been assisted a generous grant from a private donor permitting us to test samples in the laboratory. The oxygen measurements indicate that the aeration system needs some improvements, likely on the diffuser end, to properly aerate the deeper layers. There is some indication that the phosphate loading on the lake has dropped from 25 mg/liter in the fall of 1991 and 2001 to 12 mg/liter this spring; more monitoring is required to confirm this trend. If it is maintained, that's good news indeed.

Chebucto Wilderness Coalition (CWC)

Those who have been following the newsletters distributed to the WRWEO membership (and to members of some 35 different other organizations that belong to CWC) will be aware of the enormous progress that has been made toward establishing a 22,000 acre protected area in the heart of the Chebucto Peninsula. Please check out the website for an overview and for copies of the earlier newsletters. Now with a new government in power the Steering Committee for CWC is approaching the relevant ministers, particularly of NS Department of Environment and NS Department of Natural Resources, to apprise them of our progress and to see what further steps, if any, need to be taken.