

**Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization  
(WRWEO)  
2017 Annual General Meeting  
March 30, 2016  
Halifax Central Library, 2nd floor, BMO Community Room, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

**AGENDA**

1. Recognition of Unceded and Unsurrendered Mi'kmaw Territory
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes form AGM 2016 (31 March 2016)
4. Presentation on Contents of the Sign-In Book
5. Chair's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Election of Board of Directors for 2017-2018
8. Comments from Our Partners at SMBSA
9. Presentation on the NEW Bluff Trail Stewardship Program
10. Group Discussion
11. Adjournment
12. Meet & Greet Networking Time

There were 32 people in attendance.

**1. Introductions**

Kimberly Berry acknowledged that WRWEO territory is on unceded and unsurrendered Mi'kmaw territory. This is done in gratitude of the land, gratitude to the people of the land, and to remind ourselves of our place in the colonial system.

**Welcome and Acknowledgements**

- Iain Rankin, MLA
- Harry Ward, Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust
- Nick Horne, Chair of SMBSA
- Heather Olivella, Nova Scotia Environment

Kimberly Berry explains how the outlook for the trail has changed over the past year. Last year's AGM focused on how to fix the damage humans have caused on The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail. This year a solid plan has been developed and will be presented by Mike Lancaster later in the evening.

**2. Approval of agenda**

- Moved to be accepted by: Richmond Campbell
- Seconded by: Nick Horne
- Carried

### **3. Approval of minutes**

- Moved to be accepted by: Rob Williams
- Seconded by: David Patriquin
- Carried

### **4. Presentation on the Contents of the Sign-In Book – Danielle Marchand**

- 1940 entries from November 2011 to November 2016
- Humour and Profound Poetry; Haikus; Art; Celebrations (Birthdays, Anniversaries; Marriage Proposals; PRIDE week; etc.)
- Please sign the book when out and about on the trail

### **5. Chair's report - Kimberly Berry**

The report is posted on the WRWEO website.

The intent was to document the activities and progress over the past year. This will be the overview and all the details can be found in the written report. Recognition to the following organizations for their efforts to support WRWEO: NS Department of the Environment, City of Halifax, Five Bridge and Area Stewardship Coalition and their members, Council of Community Organization, Halifax Regional Trails Association, Halifax Northwest Trails, HRM Alliance, and Nova Scotia Healthy Forest Coalition, as well as others.

Renaming of the second loop took place to rename it as Mi'kmaw Hill Loop, with consultation with the First Nations Community. Digitally, all maps have been updated but the hard copies are still on going.

The parking lot has been an issue around proper parking. Kimberly has been a huge force around changing people's parking patterns through placing of signage and active community engagement

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) Audit occurred this past year through HRP (Halifax Regional Police) with recommendations described in the hard copy report. The camera feed will go to the adjacent business who will monitor the feed.

- increased lines of sight (completed)
- installation of a garbage can (completed)
- installation of light and security cameras in the upcoming year

NRET (Natural Resources Environmental Technology) Program students (Kaitlyn Enders, Allyssa Poulin) were able to join the trail team for their practicum in the form of 1 week of work with 3 full days/2 nights on the trail. A lot of valuable information around maintenance and priorities was gathered with more information in the hard copy. Through a group of groups, we were able to secure these two women to work on a number of the trails. They spent 14 days on The Bluff Trail.

A question was asked around what the students were paid.

Mike Lancaster - They were paid \$15. per hour.

Data gathered included postal code information:

- ⅓ of the users are from Chebucto peninsula
- ¼ of the users are from Halifax peninsula

They also gathered photos and information for a display board that was featured at the Tantallon Public Library in September.

During the travel ban (August 2016), the students assisted BLT rails to trails in compliance activities.

Volunteer events

- parking lot cleaning
- two events for trail hardening
- workshop on corrective tree pruning techniques
- demo of proper bowl fire on the trail
- parking lot traffic observation (40 days in total)
- parking lot engagement (16 days in total)
- painting of way markers of loop 2, 3, and 4.
- participated in Hike NS AGM - Paul Berry led a hike on the Pot Lake Loop and Kimberly gave a presentation on the human harms on the trail
- replacing signs
- putting up signs
- inspecting sites
- addressing illegal activities on the trail (lean-to) and site remediation

Contracted maintenance also occurred on the trail - Cobequid Trail Consulting

Leave No Trace educational sites (3 in total) are now set up on the trail for camping. Information is in the CAMP HERE document located on the WRWEO website. This is being used on a trial basis and will be re-evaluated at a later date to see if it is sustainable or if there is still too much harm being done to the trail environment.

Bluff Tail Stewardship Program (BTSP)

- designed to solve the problems spoke about last year
- will be presented in full by Mike Lancaster
- From Dec 10, 2016 to Jan 25, 2017 raised \$535 and \$1500 over the year for BTSP
- private donor was willing to match funds in January - \$1450
- total donations = just over \$4700 from Membership and Friends
- These funds as well as different grant applications will determine the success of the Bluff Stewardship Program

Every year NS Natural Resources completes a survey and submits a report to WRWEO. The trail report

last year reported approximately 20 fire rings, this year, only 6. The amount of garbage and litter seems to be lessening however there is noticeable trail widening. All the details are on the website.

- Moved to be accepted by: Beth McGee
- Seconded by: Rob Williams

#### **Questions:**

**Hugh Chisholm:** What is the availability of the campsites like?

There is not a check-in system currently. All of the sites could accommodate two tents and each site can legally accommodate 9 individuals. Time and usage/impact will determine how the sites will be used going forward.

**Wendy MacDonald:** How many days did it take NSE to complete the 32 km?

A helicopter was used and the report is done over many different days throughout the year.

**Ian Smith:** How is the wilderness area managed?

**Heather Olivette** - the wilderness areas are managed cooperatively between Nova Scotia Environment, Department of Natural Resources and community groups.

- Carried

#### **6. Treasurer's report - Paul Berry**

Placed on the website for perusal.

- Moved to be accepted by: Catherine Klefenz
- Seconded by: Barbara Klaas
- Carried

#### **7. ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Review of BOD agreements
- List of names offering or nominated:
  - Paul Berry (Co-Chair & Treasurer)
  - Rob Williams (Co-Chair)
  - Ben Armstrong (Co-Secretary)
  - Danielle Marchand (Co-Secretary)
  - David Patriquin (Director)
  - Marine Gameda (Director)
  - Jayden Gross (Director)
- Richmond Campbell made three (3) calls for further nominations
- there being no further nominations, all names accepted by acclamation
- Thanks to Kimberly, outgoing

- 40 pages of reports, crammed full of things we've done! we have accomplished a lot
- organization boosted to a new level
- for good reason as we're at a crossroads
- a good solid plan to move forward with conservation now

## 8. Comments from our partners at SMBSA

Nick Horne: Co-Chair of St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association

A pleasure to be working with WRWEO; and working together to steward The Bluff Trail with our Stewardship Coordinator, Mike Lancaster. I think it is a great partnership and we are going to do some pretty good things together & Congratulations for the last year!

## 9. Introduction of the new Bluff Trail Stewardship Program (BTSP) - Mike Lancaster (1:00:26)

My main introduction to WRWEO was last February, I think it was Beth McGee had called me and said there was a potential for collaboration and I thought great I can get all the stewardship advice I need from this organization that's been in operation for more than twenty years and then I found out she (Kimberly Berry) was trying to get my advice as to how to improve their efforts. But it ended up being quite a symbiotic relationship we've been able to take lessons from programs like the Micou's Island Stewardship Program that's been running for 10 years now and apply it to The Bluff Trail.

The core of this program is the volunteers

This presentation is a summary for more details see the BTSP Overview document online.

An introduction for myself, in case you need it: I am the Stewardship Coordinator for the SMBSA five year anniversary in two days; I have been a volunteer for 7 years and an arborist and forester for 8 years and as of a year ago I am also a part-time axe-throwing coach.

Introduction to the concept of a Stewardship Program

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, the term stewardship refers to:

*2. the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care <stewardship of natural resources>*

The way that I have always run programs on the islands of St Margaret's Bay it's always trying to balance environmental stewardship with community stewardship. So it can get tricky to maintain the balance, always try to consider both. In this program we are going to weigh a little more heavily in terms of environment and a little further away from community because it seems the community wants to have ring fires and wants to cut trees and build shelters where we can't really allow that because of the legality of the *Wilderness Act* we are going to try hard to strike a balance.

In terms of the Bluff Trail Stewardship Program we are going to seek to ensure the careful and responsible management of the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail and immediate surrounding wilderness

area.

We are not going to just be focusing on the trail, we are also going to ensure that we don't impact the greater wilderness area because we are cutting pretty deep into the heart of the entire wilderness area so we are not just focusing on the trail itself.

You may ask, why it's necessary on this trail? But probably not judging from crowd and the presentation that we've seen in the past accepting that scale of use is definitely part of it – tens of thousands of hikers every single year and the various recreational groups that are using it, and we've seen quite an increase in those harmful impacts and we don't think that an increase in human activity needs to result in the increased impact. Part of what I am trying to promote to people is that human presence has an impact whether or not we like it. So once you acknowledge that, just dissecting that and seeing what our impacts are and coming up with solutions as how we can reduce or eliminate them.

One of the key priorities that we are looking at is the Habitat for endangered species – flora and fauna. Obviously Mainland Moose is one of key priorities. The Chebucto Peninsula has been identified as one of the remaining herds of Mainland Moose with about 30 individuals left which is not a huge number, but with endangered species every individual counts. That is going to be one of the key themes of what we are trying to do is reduce the impacts on those habitats. Part of the initiative will be identifying those key areas, identifying the times of year when the animals don't want to be disturbed and try to get that extra boost of educational outreach to the users.

Some of the use issues that we are dealing with, from the analysis that I did last year, we saw every single metre of the trail over a three day period. The assessments done by NSE or DNR are done over longer periods of time - they see the trail a month here, and a month there, we were able to see it in a short term and really get a snapshot of that period of time. We actually saw more ring fires that DNR did. We had 32 in total, roughly one for every kilometre of the trail.

That is one of the main priorities. A lot of Chebucto Peninsula had a rather large fire in about the 1960s and there is much greater risk of forest fire spreading when you have a ground fire. A lot of wildfires are spread through the duff layer, or the organic layer on top so you can't even really tell that the fire is spreading. Having a fire on the ground is one of the greatest risks. If you travel The Bluff Trail and see of the spots where we haven't yet got to the higher level of remediation, you can see that these established fire pits have started to eat into the soil some are as much as a foot deep.

Trail widening and spurs are also a problem. People are going off trail. We are going to be trying to deter people from using those.

Tree cutting is definitely a big issue as well. From the creation of the trail there is a lot of improper tree pruning. We are going to work to correctly prune them which will really help with the healing process of those trees.

That speaks to one of initiatives that I always try. I approach stewardship from a really really micro level ... individual basis: individual people, individual organisms, try to spread that to a greater scale. If you get to the mentality that it's "just one tree" or "just one plant", it's all "just one" something ... so I try to

draw that line and say it's *not* "just one tree" let's do the best we can for this tree and moving forward the best thing for tree health is to correctively prune those trees.

Also, the bigger concern is people who are cutting trees for firewood or for creating their own structures. As you saw some of them got pretty extreme and creative, ... if it wasn't in an area like this, their ingenuity would be quite impressive, but because of the circumstances it is very concerning.

Another area we will be working on is user safety. I believe there have been 3 air lifts since 2011. For people getting injured on the trail. One of them was just from heat exhaustion and dehydration. In most cases these things are preventable, we need to get a lot of education out there to users.

The summer students were seeing people in the middle of July and August wearing flip-flops, shorts and a t-shirt. No water, no map, no walking sticks, no considerations about the animals that they were going to potentially be dealing with. We need to get the message out there. This is a Wilderness Trail - emphasis on Wilderness. We are not on a city hiking trail. This is *not* Point Pleasant Park. This is something you need to be prepared for.

One of the biggest issues is off leash dogs. We are seeing, especially with increased use, along the boardwalk, two channels being worn from dogs walking off leash. Most of the time the boardwalks are there for two reasons. To protect people from super-marshy or wet areas, but also to protect sensitive vegetation such as pitcher plants. To see the amount of damage being done by dogs off leash is a concern. The laws are a bit of gray area, where dogs are supposed to be "under control" - so it's not technically illegal for them to be off leash. We are going to be working on going forward and hope to find better solutions.

We have also come across some illegal hunting practices. People hunting too close to the trail. Some people are under the impression that wilderness protected area implies that you can't hunting there. We need to get the word out about when hunting season is, when people should be wearing blaze orange, and that hunting does happen in that area.

Littering is not a huge problem, and the worst of it is in relationship to camping.

Key to all of this will be the volunteers. The volunteer bluff trail stewards, on the ground, engaging with the users, hoping to educate them about harmful impacts, how they can be eliminated or at least mitigated or reduced. In most cases there are small behavioural changes that go a long way.

Reduce the amount of illegal activity like tree cutting and illegal camping.

Increase the current level of volunteer engagement by recruiting and training, volunteer Bluff Trail stewards - that is the backbone of the program.

Online there are probably about 30 program goals, I have condensed these to some of the most important:

Proposing and implementing appropriate stewardship techniques.

Part of that is establishing a lot of baselines in terms of flora and fauna that are there. When we know the species that are there then we can assess what kind of habitat they want to have and we can reduce our impact on them.

Also communicating with the community and find how they want to use it and balance community and ecological stewardship.

We are also going to be dedicating some time to find more funding to ensure sustainability for the program.

Also, promoting the safe use of the trail.

We want to include community consultation - ensure we incorporate the way that users want to see this work. We don't want to dictate. We want to engage and move forward with a solution that will work for everybody.

The role of Bluff Trail Stewards - there are a few here tonight: Jayden Gross and Drew Wagner, [Ian Smith], I am sure Heather will be getting involved, maybe Bionca as well. Anyone who is interested in the trail, get involved in the program.

It's never about enforcement, just about trying to get that middle ground where everybody is happy and so is the environment.

The main role that trail stewards will fill is trail user engagement. This is the real meat and potatoes work. Individual conversations with users on the trail and educate them about the issues we are dealing with.

One of the biggest things that I am looking forward to is site remediation. We are promoting that we dismantle all existing fire pits and go with the fire bowls. We've got five bowls if anyone wants to purchase one. We are selling them at cost for \$15.00.

They are pretty easy to use.

**Ian Smith:** over time, even ten people a year, the use of fire bowls will result in the removal of a large amount of combustible debris. Maybe no fire at all would be better approach.

**Paul Berry:** echoing Ian's comments that the fallen dead wood and combustible debris will eventually be denuded.

**Mike Lancaster:** it's the same as if we said we closed the trail and said you can't come here, there are still going to be a lot of people who come here. It's same if we said you can't have fires, there is still going to be a lot of people who still have fires. It's the lesser of two evils. If you need to have a fire this is the best way to do it. We are not saying please come and have a fire in this bowl. ... Best case scenario is that people don't have fires.

Trail monitoring another role of trail stewards



What to do in case of emergency ... know what to do ...

Drew and I both had the unique experience of seeing one of the helicopters land a few weeks ago and take off the woman who had ... she actually ended up just twisting her ankle, I think, but it was quite an operation to see.

**Wendy McDonald:** is there a site in place new for helicopters to land? A helipad?

**Mike Lancaster:** Can you speak to that Heather?

**Heather Olivella:** no, it's not in place yet, we are still waiting for a detailed proposal but it is something that we are looking at further.

**Mike Lancaster:** ... we are working with Search & Rescue and meeting with Nova Scotia Environment to explore egress options to make it a little easier to get folks egressed from the trail, especially from the second loop. The woman who twisted her ankle she was just at the first loop, she was only about 3k from the trailhead, but the conditions were such that it make it tricky to carry her out. We are exploring as many options as we can to kind of eliminate the need for giant operations with helicopters.

In regard to how we are will evaluate the success of the program:

We are not going to be able to see some of the real changes that we've made until probably next year or maybe even the third year

There are lots of incremental successes that we can measure along the way such as remediation and users engaged. There is a lot more information about that online as well.

So far, just for this year we have trained 15 stewards trained so far, hoping to have 50 by end of the year.

We do one training session every month. Last month we had 8 (stewards trained) the month before we had 6 (stewards trained) and I am number 1, so that makes 15.

Also we have added 7 new species of fauna to the compendium.

Over 200 trail users engaged with only 15 volunteers in only two months

We have remediated 12 damaged sites

Over 150 volunteer hours coordinated

Over \$3,000 in-kind volunteer contributions calculated from a living wage done by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (\$20.10/hour)

How we can help:

Become a designated trail steward / Purchase a WRWEO membership / attend Stewardship Days and Fundraising Events / Donate to the program / Promote Leave No trace and in general best practice

principles on the trail / help with organizational and administrative tasks / spend as much time on the trail engaging other people on the trail / come to us with your ideas /

Upcoming public events:

- Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> – ‘Goodwill Bot’ Fundraiser at Good Robot Brewing
- Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Volunteer Stewardship Day and Bluff Trail Steward training session
- Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup> - Volunteer Stewardship Day and Bluff Trail Steward training session
- Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> – The Flora and Fauna of The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail: An Educational Hike

5 species added to compendium this year: Red-tailed hawk; Black-backed woodpecker; Northern Shrike; dead vole placed in crotch of tree – behavioural aspect of Shrikes; Grey Jays or Whiskey Jacks.

That’s about it, thank you very much.

## 10. Group Discussion

**Bob McDonald:** Do you have really nice any official uniform as a trail steward?

**Mike Lancaster:** We don’t. There’s the trail warden or patrol vests that came around. I am not a fan of those I don’t want the stewards to feel as though they are in kind of higher up position of authority

**Bob McDonald:** Has there been an official bio survey in the trail system?

**Mike Lancaster:** I think it has been kind of ongoing as I understand. I know that David Patriquin compiled a species compendium and that’s what I build off of last year. Last year, myself and the two NRET students added 27 new species to it. It speaks to the fact that it is fairly basic level and I don’t think there has really been a concerted effort to do it it’s just kind of been observational rather than intentional. So, I think we will host some bio-blitz style events throughout the course of it and hopefully get some experts out there who know more than I do and be able to identify.

**Bob McDonald:** I was thinking you probably don’t know all the different types of lichens, mosses,

**Mike Lancaster:** I don’t. I know a fair amount of mosses. That was actually one of the areas where we added, I think 6 species, but lichens, I know three species of lichen. That would definitely be a way of contributing to the compendium.

**Bob McDonald:** do you know of any species at risk?

**Mike Lancaster:** in terms of lichen? Or flora in general?

**Bob McDonald:** in terms of common nighthawk ... olive-sided flycatcher

**Mike Lancaster:** olive-sided flycatcher has been observed from the trail in the past, mountain sandwort

... and broom crowberry as well. As far as I know Canada warbler has been not observed, but it seem like it would be a good spot for it. Which bird is it that nests only in Jack Pine? There is a specific endangered species of bird that we have that only nests in Jack Pine, and there is a small scattering of Jack Pine throughout the trail so there is a potential for that

**Bob McDonald:** Kirtland's warbler

**Ian Smith:** The trail hardening [using found stone] that [Cobequid Trail Consulting] was hired to do, it looks like it is incomplete, is he coming back to finish it? Because there are stones that are not in place and there are a lot of stones that are placed, but not set down. They need to be dug out a bit and set down.

**Mike Lancaster:** I think it will be a combination of both. I assume moving forward that they will be hired again this year as well as we will address those issues with some of the volunteer work days.

**Ian Smith:** Another question, I am still concerned about the - I call it the fort – I think it was originally a blind.

**Kimberly Berry:** The stone deer blind on Mi'kmaw Hill.

**Ian Smith:** It is just a matter of time before it collapses and would WRWEO be, would we be at all, ...?

**Kimberly Berry:** empowered to remove it?

**Ian Smith:** not the empowering part, but if someone were injured could they sue WRWEO?

**Kimberly Berry:** I think the question that WRWEO wants to deal with - probably at the first meeting in April is what is the approach we want to take to that structure. Some of us might suggest the thing to do is to take it apart, and use the stone to address some of the spots in need of stone hardening. In addition to your concerns about the safety hazards that it poses, it's also a magnet for poor behaviour. A lot of people have fires there a lot of people leave their garbage there. Perhaps removing it might be the sensible thing to do. That will certainly be on the agenda.

**Paul Berry:** Have you invited people to attend and/or indicate an interest in attending board meetings if they wanted to?

**Kimberly Berry:** No I haven't. I forgot to mention, our board meetings are open to our membership if you wanted to, you are welcome to come. We don't send a mailout to everyone about every meeting, but if you are interested in attending, let one of us know and we'll make sure that you are included on the emails.

**Paul Berry:** it's a great way to test drive [becoming a director]

**Kimberly Berry:** it's a great way to test drive the director role – come see how the board works - visit it, fall in love with it, and join the board.

**Mike Lancaster:** Heather, what is NSE's stance on that structure; you are probably familiar with it.

**Heather Olivella:** I think our position would be if it is causing a management issue we would be totally fine with it being removed but it's a decision that WRWEO should talk about.

**Mike Lancaster:** I think Ian, there are some issues, it starts to become a little bit sensitive and it's not always - not clear cut decision in terms of aspects like that ... there is a memorial for someone off the trail technically it's not supposed to be there but we are not going to be dismantling it because we don't know who it's for we don't know the significance of it – so we just approach those community based issues a little bit more sensitively – approach it as community-wide as we can.

**Paul Berry:** I was just going to say about the deer blind I think there would be a bit of an uproar if it was removed, so we have to approach it sensitively and carefully and maybe even have some public engagement around it – some people really look forward to seeing it – it's a pretty spectacular thing to see out on the bluffs – if it were gone it would be hard for a lot of people even though it does tend to be a magnet for fires and for trash and potentially fall down and injure someone.

**Ian Smith:** the purpose of the trail is to be at one with the trail ...

**Laurel Schut:** I've never seen the structure, but is there way you can reinforce it and then almost make it an educational hub?

**Kimberly Berry:** Before these issues had grown, I had thought about doing some research around the origins of the structure and maybe having an interpretive panel there to talk about hunting and the practices of deer blinds and make it more of a landmark and attraction, and information piece. My feelings have changed as it has become more of a problem, but you are right – can we use it as an engagement piece? Do we want to just try to keep up with the problems, I don't know the exact condition of the structure, but if there were loose stones that could be removed and solid structure maybe could remain. There's lots of possibilities that we can explore.

**Mike Lancaster:** do you know how long the structure has been there?

**Richmond Campbell:** it was certainly there before the trail was built. The best estimate I could get was 1920s maybe. The big ones, there originally, the original boulders that were there I don't think anyone is going to be able to move them, but the stones put on top could definitely fall

**Kimberly Berry:** they could definitely be removed.

**Nick Horne:** I think if you have an interpretive panel and talked about the history of it people will be less likely to alter it.

**Mike Lancaster:** One of the issues is that people often have fires on its outer base, because there is a larger bowl off to the side or within it as well.

**Paul Berry:** Do we think we need anything to identify our stewards do we need little badges, a hat? This is something we have been kicking around at the board and with Mike as well. If there are ideas we

would like to hear.

**Nick Horne:** I think no ID will probably make new stewards more organically. You observe stewards without any badge, vest, etc. it encourages others to do the same.

**Ian Smith:** I was on the training last weekend, as Mike says you lead with a friendly engagement - what kind of dog is that?

**Mike Lancaster:** You always try to start the conversation on pleasantly, person to person individual bases, on “Hi, we’re both users of this great trail” rather than “Hi, I’m a steward and this is what you are doing and why it’s wrong.” Because you always want to make sure you are leaving people with a positive impressive even if they are doing something negative and you don’t end up changing that behaviour, you don’t want their lasting impression to be how you keep hounding them and telling them that they were a jerk nobody is going to win in that case, the volunteer is going to come out with a sour taste and the person who did it is probably going to come back and do it again, even it’s kind of chipping away and starting to turn their mentality toward the practice we like to see as long as it’s a positive experience with the stewards. At the beginning the island stewards wore a vest and a badge when I came on and got to do what I wanted, I said we are going to take that off – to instill that person-to-person mentality not coming from any kind of higher up stance, just engage with them as a person who is concerned not any better, necessarily know any better, you’re more aware of some of these issues.

Jayden and Drew, what do you think as people who have gone out there as volunteers?

**Drew Wagner:** I feel more comfortable without it.

**Laurel Schut:** Perhaps business cards with email contact information etc.

**Drew Wagner:** That is a good idea, I agree, but usually when you hand someone a business card it ends up somewhere on the way out.

**Jayden Gross:** Perhaps bandanas with logo on it the link.

**Drew Wagner:** The wooden cookies.

**Mike Lancaster:** The tree cookies, and something we have talked about is a QR Code

**Heather Davis:** Perhaps a laminated version of volunteer handout BTSP, map, etc.

**Beth McGee:** I serve as a trail patrol [on another trail], I say that I am sort of like the Walmart greeter – I stop and engage with people and ask how they are enjoying the trail what can we do to make it a more positive experience.

**Mike Lancaster:** The role of a Bluff Trail Steward doesn’t necessarily need to be somebody who is okay with that level of user engagement not everybody is confident or willing to engage with strangers in the middle of a wilderness area so that role is not for everybody. We are also looking for people who will perform the monitoring aspects and don’t need to engage with users.

**Kimberly Berry:** The reporting and the remediation work – there is plenty of work to be done that doesn't necessitate the engagement piece necessarily - so different stewards might play different roles.

**Mike Lancaster:** We never want to turn away somebody who could contribute to the program in a different form than the traditional user engagement approach.

**Catherine Klefenz:** I wanted to go back to the year 2000 before this trail was made, for Richmond Campbell – this was his backyard and he wanted his backyard for himself, he went out there for days sometimes even in the winter time that was how he lived, so making this trail was really hard on Richmond. It was going in his backyard. You can commend him on it – he really went out and really did it – because it was really against his.

**Richmond Campbell:** That's half right, I just loved being out there alone. I really did, but I realized that it would probably be, in the near future, a parking lot – quite seriously. It was only going to be my backyard, my place to play, for a short time, so that's when it became clear – if you really like this place you have to go in with others and make it protected.

**Catherine Klefenz:** It took us awhile to get it protected.

**Mike Lancaster:** Even though we see that level of users now, the majority of them on the first loop so you still get quite a lot of that solitude on the back two loops especially.

**Kimberly Berry:** Any other comments?

**Ian Smith:** I'd like to make one last point about the parking lot – that sign that says how to park - I don't actually recall having seen it ... do we need more of them?

**Mike Lancaster:** It's big.

**Kimberly Berry:** Commented on the overload of signs – more signs are probably not the answer, that is why I am hoping that we can all just commit to demonstrating the parking pattern for others every time we visit.

**Catherine Klefenz:** I do that at Lakeside Community Centre – set the example with how I park.

**Kimberly Berry:** It is unhelpful to our users if we overload on the signage.

**Mike Lancaster:** Especially at the trailhead there is a lot of signage there. Our two students last year were either just past that or a couple kilometres in, and it seems fairly evident from the data collected that most people didn't read them or didn't think it was serious – the level of users, the people who were just not prepared for the experience – and those signs clearly say you need to be prepared this is exactly what you need to be coming into this environment. Either they disregard it or don't read it – I think it is a combination of both.

**Kimberly Berry:** Always interesting to see hiking or educational groups who will stop and teach group members how to stop and read the signs.

**Tom Musial:** In 2010, city council passed a master plan for the Western Commons Wilderness Commons, which is a plan for a park that will in time fill the area from Ragged Lake Industrial Park, going out highway 103 to the western boundary of Nine Mile River, and down highway 333 to about Goodwood, or Hackett Lake there is a plan for implementation of park area and a second community advisory committee has been appointed and is now working on several issues that have to do with ecological integrity, cultural and historically facets and predominantly outdoor recreational activities. Central to those activities is trails; there is a plan for the establishment of several different types of trails the committee is now examining those trails. Examining what uses what recreational activities the park will accommodate the laying down of roads and trails will largely determine the location of all of those activities. This whole endeavour is a neighbor to The Bluff Trail. There are ways in which the WRWEO organization can and should be cooperating with the advisory committee. I am happy to say that David Patriquin is a member of the advisory committee. So, he can be a conduit of input. There is some concern among members of the committee about a proposed trail that potentially would connect at least with the Nine Mile River, whether or not there is any interest in carrying the trail across the river and connecting it to The Bluff Trail. There are some positive sides to this. If the park were to accommodate campsites, probably a lot of the problematic camping on The Bluff Trail might be moved to the park. Etc. Western Commons advisory committee, website, you can follow online.

**Kimberly Berry:** Any other questions or comments? The board members will join for a moment, everyone else is invited to mingle, network, and there is a little sweet treat at the back, cookies baked by Pavia, etc.

**Mike Lancaster:** I just wanted to tell a story about Kimberly's level of commitment. At the pruning workshop, where Kimberly broke her leg [after slipping on the whale's back]. Part way through her egress back to the parking lot, she met up with Jayden and I, who were leaving at the time and we proceeded to host about a 45 minute meeting on the trail talking about trail issues, how we were going to move forward with the stewardship program, the funding initiatives, all while she had a broken leg - the last woman that broke her leg was airlifted out, Kim hobbled out and had a 45 minute meeting to talk about the welfare of this trail!

## **11. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn – 8 PM

## **12. Meet & Greet Networking**