



WRWEO respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and unsurrendered ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq (L'nu). We are all treaty people.

Chair's report for the 2019 AGM - Prepared by Paul Berry

WRWEO wants to recognize the passing of Catherine Klefenz on December 10, 2018. Catherine was a long time chair and director of the BLT Rails to Trails Association she was also a long-time member, friend, and supporter of WRWEO and the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail. She was a passionate advocate, a community builder, and a valued collaborator and she is missed.

Although not officially a 2018 item - WRWEO is very happy to hear the news that NS Nature Trust is making a bid to purchase land adjacent to Frederick Lake and visible from the Mi'kmaw Hill Loop of The Bluff Trail. In 2012, David Patriquin was responsible for [gathering and curating the information](#) necessary for WRWEO to campaign for the protection of that parcel of land. As Richmond Campbell has pointed out:

“Development of that shoreline would seriously impact connectivity of habitat within the Wilderness Area. Housing all along that shore would also devastate the incredible vistas and wilderness values for the many people who like the Bluff Trail and paddle these wilderness lakes.”

I am going to leave most of the reporting on the state of the trail to our Bluff Trail Stewardship Program (BTSP) Stewardship Coordinator, Mike Lancaster. However, I want to thank him for his work and dedication to the Bluff Trail. I also want to thank my partner, Kimberly Berry, for all her work to help compile the BTSP trail reports in 2018 and for writing the [BTSP year in review report](#).

The Board of Directors for this past year included: myself (Paul Berry) as chair and treasurer (I am offering for another term); Ben Armstrong as secretary (who is offering for another term); Jayden Gross (who is leaving this year); David Patriquin (who is also leaving this year); Marine Gameda (who is offering for another term); Brice Walsh (who is also offering for another term); and Rob Williams (who is leaving this year).

I want to thank David Patriquin for all his support for WRWEO and the work we have undertaken over the years. His dedication and expertise have been invaluable in

WRWEO respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and unsurrendered ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq (L'nu). We are all treaty people.

advancing our agenda of stewardship for the Woodens River Watershed. The amount of time he spends out on trail, and in the wilderness around the trail, studying and documenting the flora and fauna is amazing. If you have a moment you can watch him examining [Spring Flora on The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail](#) you should also check out his blog <http://versicolor.ca/>

Jayden Gross will really be missed in the future. His contributions as a board member have been significant, for instance, he has organized the last two AGM's - a project with many moving parts. He always brings loads of energy and enthusiasm to our meetings and has wonderful ideas. He also acted as a contractor for WRWEO and has worked hard on the Bluff Trail doing side of trail maintenance as well as trail hardening with found stone. He has also filmed and edited the Bluff Trail Stewardship Program videos that are available on YouTube. He has been an incredible contributor to WRWEO and the BTSP.

Videos Produced by Jayden Gross:



Introduction to the BTSP

The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail

2:30



Trail barricades - combatting trail widening and trail spurs

The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail

1:16

Rob Williams has been a board member since 2016 and, as an avid canoeist, has spent many hours on the lakes in and around the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail. He has also volunteered his time, and that of his two sons, for work on the trail. His contributions are sincerely appreciated.



WRWEO respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and unsurrendered ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq (L'nu). We are all treaty people.

The board met eight times in 2018 and we reviewed and discussed all of the financial information that came before the board, trail maintenance that was outside of the scope of the BTSP, the Five Bridge Wilderness Area Coalition (which will meet on an ad-hoc basis going forward), updated our information with the NS Registry of Joint Stocks, we examined fund raising options for the BTSP, one board member spent some time reviewing all the work that has been prepared on water quality, repair and upkeep of the mural on the BLT R2T (still ongoing but WRWEO has committed to support our sister organizations in this endeavour), dealt with our online presence by continuing to purchase our domain names, dealt with snow removal in the parking lot (which was a little more expensive this year), participated in the Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA), and the board contributed to the NS Trails Federation request for input on the provincial Trails' Strategy.

In terms of trail maintenance we undertook trail hardening with found stone on the first and second loops. We also ensured dead fall was removed from all the trail in two sweeps and had some side of trail brush cutting done in a few selected areas. We reviewed the work of Mike Lancaster, the BTSP Stewardship Coordinator, who submits weekly reports and seeks the approval of the Board for special projects (such as hiring summer students under the federal Canada Summer Jobs Program).

We have secured some funding for the BTSP but need to raise more money in order to keep this program running. We will be making public appeals in the future.

We sent a letter a Minister Iain Rankin opposing the Alton Gas project.

We worked with Halifax Search and Rescue to help them shoot a segment with a DNR helicopter on Remote Rescue.

<https://www.facebook.com/HalifaxSAR/videos/1551214954954681/>

WRWEO became part of the Sandy Lake Regional Park Coalition, to protect the lands and waters between Sandy Lake (Hammonds Plains Rd, Bedford) and the Sackville River by expanding the park lands to include the sensitive watershed area.



WRWEO respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and unsurrendered ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq (L'nu). We are all treaty people.

Students at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) examined samples from several areas in the Woodens River Watershed and examined the link between microplastics and macroinvertebrates (animals that lack a spine and can be seen with the naked eye, e.g. bugs). <https://wp.me/p7AzSL-xH>

Ben Armstrong created a place in iNaturalist that represents the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail:

<https://inaturalist.ca/places/the-bluff-wilderness-hiking-trail>

Joined many trail groups in writing letters to support construction of a trail from Windsor Junction to Windsor. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1640105839357517/>
<https://www.uniacketrails.ca/>

Supported the Halifax Green Network Plan - <https://wp.me/p7AzSL-ya> which was passed by Halifax council in August 2018 <https://wp.me/p7AzSL-yu>

Supported Kathleen Hipwell, a second year Environmental Engineering Technology student at NSCC who is continuing work started by other students on Sediment Analysis of the Woodens River Watershed: Microplastic Pollution and Macroinvertebrate Health. Kathleen's research is to assess macroinvertebrate diversity, and microplastics in sediment, along the Bluff Trail. Her goal is to contribute to the ongoing environmental monitoring within the Woodens River Watershed.

WRWEO co-hosted a screening of the movie "Burned", an exposé of biomass. (Trailer available [here](#)) on Wednesday, November 28th at 7:30 PM.

Dalhousie scientists identified a new life form from dirt they obtained from The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail <https://wp.me/p7AzSL-AT>

Through the BTSP we assisted and supported many groups who hiked The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail - Trips by Transit, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award groups, BLT Runners Association and local Scout troops.



WRWEO respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and unsundered ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq (L'nu). We are all treaty people.