

**SMaRTS
Spring Meeting
Canadian Wildlife Service Regional Headquarters
Sackville, New Brunswick
Wednesday, May 11, 2005
10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

Participants:

Jeff Ollerhead, Mount Allison University (co-chair); Peter Wells, Environment Canada and BoFEP; Deanna McCullum, NB Dept. of Environment & Local Government; Deanne Meadus, Ducks Unlimited Canada; Danika van Proosdij, Saint Mary's University; Léa Olsen, Mount Allison University; Paula Noel, McGill University; Graham MacDonald, McGill University; Mary Knockwood, Fort Folly Mi'kmaq First Nation; Stacey Byers, McGill University; Gail Chmura, McGill University; Anne Sabourin, McGill University; Andy Sharpe, Clean Annapolis River Project; Shayne McQuaid, Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans; Tony Bowron, EAC; Cindy Spicer, Mount Allison Coastal Wetlands Institute.

CCIAP

The Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Program (CCIAP) has not awarded any grants for Bay of Fundy projects that we are aware of. Jeff is looking into the status of this funding. Action: draft a letter from BoFEP offering expertise and advice to the CCIAP review committee.

Salt Marsh Restoration Projects

Musquash Marsh Restoration - Deanne Meadus & Jeff Ollerhead

This project is nearly complete with ~ 38 acres of drained agriculture land now exposed to the tide. A report will be finalized and distributed in the near future. The science and monitoring of the area will continue this summer with the assistance of a Science Horizons research technician working with Diana Hamilton. Research in the area will include vegetation sampling and avian surveys.

Monitoring work for the area pre- and post-restoration is continuing:

- GPS mapping has been completed
- 1:4000 aerial photographs were taken by Ducks Unlimited Canada and MTA (40 targets about 1m x 1m were placed prior to photography)
- vegetation surveys (25 plots) were completed by MTA (obtaining % cover, stem density and stem height)

Note: Acadia University is no longer formally participating in this project.

The project cost at least \$138,000 (\$26,000 of this was spent in research) and additional funds are required for restoration of the area and monitoring. It was recommended that this area become part of the proposed Marine Protected Area. A report should be completed and submitted to the Gulf of Maine Council in the near future.

Concerns over the lack of funds for restoration should be brought to GoMC.

Minas Basin Report - Tony Bowron

Cheverie Creek marsh - construction is planned to begin in late August.

Inner Bay of Fundy Salmon - Habitat and Restoration: a short list of priority crossings/barrier sites to restore is being prepared (ideally 1 or 2 per county).

A complete set of fact sheets on all the studied Nova Scotia barriers will soon be completed.

Walton Creek (Ducks Unlimited Canada) - a proposal to remove a freshwater impoundment is in development. They could use mitigation funding from DOT?

The Gulf of Maine Council may fund restoration projects. It was suggested that fact sheets be prepared for all sites and each site prioritized. These should be available when the government (or anyone else) requires them.

SMU-EC-BoFEP-GOMCME barriers study - progress report

Bay of Fundy Tidal Barriers GIS Database Development - Danika van Proosdij

The locations of barriers and their cumulative impacts are being housed in the database. It was suggested that this database could be accessed via 2 mirror sites: Coastal Wetlands Institute and St Mary's University.

Report on the last Minas Basin working group meeting - Peter Wells

BoFEP does most of its work through working groups.

State of the Environment for Minas Basin working group is organizing a 3-4 day field trip to familiarize students with the system.

Land Use Planner - watershed approach to the Minas Basin: urban and municipal planners are asking them to demonstrate the impacts of projects in the area.

Fundy Biosphere Reserve - a formal proposal for the upper portion of Fundy is moving ahead.

Infomatics Project - an upgrade to the website is underway, include projects and bibliographies and the creation of a searchable CD.

The 7th Bay of Fundy Workshop will be held in St. Andrews, NB from Oct 25-27, 2006. Actions: SMaRTS will sponsor a session on salt marsh restoration. The session will have an optional fieldtrip to Musquash marsh on the Saturday. A call for papers will be late fall/early winter. Danika van Proosdij, Anita Hamilton, Tony Bowron and Jeff Ollerhead will work together to create a colloquium for this meeting. Danika and Anita will hopefully prepare a SMaRTS poster.

SMaRTS leadership:

Janice Harvey (co-chair) is stepping down after many years of service. She was thanked for her efforts over the years.

Jeff Ollerhead (co-chair) asked: the group has a mission statement, annual meetings, and generates work plans to receive funding from BoFEP - can/should SMaRTS continue to operate as a group?

Everyone felt that the group should continue and that it is a useful venue. Tony noted that the importance of the group shouldn't be downplayed - the provinces and states notice the importance and accomplishments of the group.

Shayne McQuaid nominated Tony Bowron as new co-chair - Tony accepted.

Danika might consider becoming the other co-chair when she returns from sabbatical leave.

The group will continue to meet ~ 2 times/year but it will not maintain a web page or produce newsletters.

The group tends to be research and policy oriented and attracts researchers with students.

Other Business:

Anyone wishing to send a message out to the group can do so by contacting Jeff Ollerhead or Jon Percy.

NB Wetlands Policy - Deanna

The NB wetlands policy is official; implementation is the issue.

Mitigation guidelines are in draft form; the NB DELG plan to have an account set-up to hold mitigation funds until a priority project is identified.

Deanna encourages NGOs to put together projects that could take advantage of the mitigation funds collected.

A wetlands delineation course could/should be prepared and offered at various universities.

Compensation inventory for inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic Salmon rivers - Shayne McQuaid

The inner Bay of Fundy (iBoF) Atlantic salmon population is listed as endangered under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). Actions to remediate degraded freshwater habitat are still encouraged. Finding ways to fund restoration activities, and determining where best to focus restoration efforts, is a continuing struggle. Establishing an inventory of locations requiring restoration will formalize and facilitate use of the HADD compensation process, and will ensure that efforts are focused where they are most needed.

Future Plans:

Action: Solicit a letter from BoFEP to CCIAP to express concerns about how Bay of Fundy projects have been reviewed. Jeff will draft a letter and hand it over to Peter Wells.

Action: Sponsor a set of sessions at the 7th meeting of BoFEP

- solicited papers and volunteered papers are needed
- workshop/round-table discussion is desired
- field trip to Musquash site is desired
- invite Canadian Geographic and Saltscapes to be sponsors?

Sea level is rising and the costs for maintaining dykes are increasing. Is there an advocacy role for SMaRTS? We monitor salt marshes but there is no official protocol for monitoring.

Action: Organize a process to prepare an upper Bay of Fundy protocol - SMaRTS sponsored.

- apply to the Gulf of Maine Council for funding
- contact the Minas Basin working group (Patricia) for a list of potential funders
- have an initial meeting in 2006 to look at protocols/design a way forward
- meet again in 2007 to put the protocol into a document and finalize

Action: Peter Wells would like to have a 2 page report highlighting SMaRTS for the Gulf of Maine meeting in June. Can this be done?

SMaRTS Budget - BoFEP wants to run without money from the Federal Government. They suggest taking 10% of funding that the group receives to help finance BoFEP. This proposal was discussed and it was not received very favourably. Many funders would not allow this anyway.

Danika suggested making the Mount Allison CWI a SMaRTS center for document deposit.

Action: Jeff and Cindy will make this possible if people wish to deposit documents with MACWI.

Jeff attended an ACCESS meeting in Moncton early in May. BoFEP should consider the recent emergence of ACCESS and the impacts. The group is currently focused on fisheries because their funding seems to come in part from DFO.

Action: BoFEP should work with ACCESS to avoid duplication of effort (develop links).

Action: Preferred date and time for next meeting - Thursday, October 13, 2005 at 10 am.