

# The industrialization of Bay of Fundy

At a press conference held last week on environmental concerns in Nova Scotia, Peter Wells, Acting Chair of the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP), talked of the industrialization on the Bay of Fundy. This is an apt description of what is happening to the Bay of Fundy.

BoFEP is a well respected network of academic and government scientists, community organizations and others who are concerned about the Bay of Fundy. They have sponsored several workshops and other



## Environmental Gremlin

Stephen Hawboldt

events on environmental issues facing the Bay.

When one looks at the range of projects being developed or proposed around the Bay, it is easy to see why some within the BoFEP network might be concerned about the industrialization of the Bay of Fundy.

Starting at the mouth of the Bay near the Canada-US border, there are two liquified natural gas (LNG) terminals proposed in Passamaquoddy Bay. While they are on the US side of the border, access will be across

Canadian waters.

Also in New Brunswick, Irving interests are seeking regulatory permission to build a second oil refinery. The new one will be at least as large as the existing one, the largest on the eastern seaboard, and it will continue to operate.

On the Nova Scotia side of the Bay, a giant basalt quarry has just completed the public hearing parts of the environment assessment process. The review panel will make recommendation to the federal and provincial ministers of the environment this fall.

If this project goes ahead, it is quite likely that others will follow in short order. The

basalt on the North Mountain is among the finest in the world.

Also along the lower Bay, there is always pressure from developers to expand the number and density of aquaculture sites. These are for salmon and other finfish, clams, scallops and other farmed marine species.

In the mid portion of the Bay, hydrographic surveys have discovered huge gravel deposits on the bottom. According to some work done by one consultant, the technology is such that mining these underwater gravel deposits is economically feasible today.

In the Shubenacadie River two developments are proposed. One has to do with the mining of gravel and sand deposits.

In another, a developer is proposing to store natural gas in huge underground salt caves created using water from the Shubie. The water, which would be a very salty brine, would be returned to the river to be flushed to sea. The ecological implications are huge.

For the second time in a generation, tidal power is again being proposed for various locations throughout the Bay. The impacts on this unique ecosystem are not yet known.

While the big projects are easy to point toward, the cumulative effects of many small projects might be as great or even more significant. These include road construction, urbanization and suburban sprawl along both shores of the Bay.

Wells puts it quite simply, knowledge about the stresses facing the Bay is critical to using these vast resources in a sustainable way. This work is critical for we are witnessing the industrialization of the Bay of Fundy.