

**“Planning for Action in the Minas Basin Watershed!”
Community Forum Summary**

Minas Basin Community Forum
Horton High School, Wolfville, NS
Thursday January 24, 2002

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Thursday January 24th, 2002, over 100 people gathered to participate in a Community Forum designed to initiate real actions toward sustainable management of the natural and human resources of the Minas Basin Watershed. The Forum was meant to build on current and past initiatives by government and non-government organizations aimed at identifying issues of concern to the residents of the watershed. The structure of the Forum included an Open House with displays, followed by a discussion period where issues were identified and discussed in small groups.

The Open House was a success with 23 displays that exhibited a wide range of information from government programs to local initiatives. The purpose of the Open House was to let people know what activities were being carried out by other groups, and to network and enhance communication between groups. The discussion period began with Dr. Graham Daborn, Chair of BoFEP, giving a brief introduction to BoFEP, the Minas Basin Working Group and the goals of the Community Forum. Participants were then asked to prioritize the issues they wished to discuss that evening. Based on these results five Focus Groups were formed: Agricultural Practices, Development, Fisheries Management, Forestry Practices and Sewage/Water quality. A summary of discussions held by each Focus Group follows.

Agricultural Practices:

The Agricultural Practices working group identified a large number of issues ranging from genetically modified organisms to protection of groundwater recharge areas. The most general theme, and the one which most of the issues could be related to, is the *sustainability* of agriculture, not only in terms of how it is presently practiced, but also in terms of how it will be impacted by large scale global changes, such as globalization of economic markets and climate change. A major, more local, issue identified was the quality and quantity of water available for agriculture use, which has become a major concern as a result of the unusually dry summers that have occurred in the Annapolis Valley over the last several years.

Development:

Eastern Kings County is one of the fastest growing regions of the province, outside of Metro Halifax. Understandably there is considerable concern about the direction and pace of this growth. It was generally agreed that growth/development is probably inevitable and that this is not necessarily a bad thing in itself if it takes place with careful planning and care for the quality of life of residents. We have to move away from the current overemphasis on tax generating growth towards a planning process that emphasizes sustainable development. We need to look at ways of evolving as a complete community, not just as an economic entity. Local governments should be doing an honest assessment of development that considers the value of all ecosystem components, not just the tax-based components. The negative impacts of development have to be identified and evaluated and where possible eliminated or reduced. There needs to be a systematic plan to protect ecological integrity and the functioning of critical ecosystem processes. We have to consider the value of "ecosystem services" in our long-term planning. Provision also has to be made for continued and expanded access to coastal areas and undeveloped

areas for low-impact recreational use. More areas need to be “set aside” and protected from development. We need to define more precisely what elements in the natural landscape we particularly value and then work to shield those elements from the adverse impacts of development in the region. The role of the “working landscape” of the region also has to be considered. We need to investigate ways to more efficiently use the available land to meet social, ecological and economic needs. Public education, communication and consultation should be an integral part of the planning process. We also need better planning of land management and more effort needs to be devoted to assessment and measurement of the impacts of development.

Fisheries Management:

Most of the discussion in this group focused around the issues of fisheries management, defining the relationship between DFO and the user groups, information exchange and who should assume the responsibility for funding fisheries management and conservation. Issues that were identified included the need to review historical and present status of fish and fishery resources, to consider ecosystem-level impacts and objectives, to inventory the status of fisheries resources and habitat, to have more input from community and fishers, the need of more funding for resource management and to better understand the importance of a fishery to its community. The group agreed the issues identified should be addressed through an integrated resource management strategy involving government, stakeholders and community groups, and also that a working group be developed to identify stakeholders, an organization or group to take a leadership role, to identify sources of funding and to help facilitate information exchange from government organizations. The BoFEP Minas Basin Working Group has put together a proposal to examine the feasibility of integrated fisheries management in the Minas Basin. If approved, this could be a starting point for the above actions.

Forestry Practices:

The forestry session identified eight key issues of concern: forest sustainability (ecologically, socially and economically), deforestation, land ownership, understanding of provincial forestry policy, and the human and non-human value of forests, reforestation, stewardship and education. All people should be involved to help to resolve the issues. Participants identified a variety of resources that are needed including: current inventories, knowledge, and information on forest management practices/guidelines, legislation, and existing structures and networks; education; stewardship; paradigm shifts; and funding. In terms of next steps, participants recommended a conference/meeting of all key players, consensus and action, and the need for inventories of current forestry groups/activities, incentive programs (in funding, publicity and taxes), and improved legislation.

Sewage/Water Quality:

The water quality issue in its full breadth was discussed, sewage being considered one part only. Four issues were identified – surface water quality and quantity, groundwater, legal questions and information and education. A Minas Basin Water Report covering the watershed is needed; it should include a description of sources of threats to water, a listing of water quality parameters as a guide to monitoring, and a review of the location

and condition of groundwater sources. More effective use of current legislation, water standards rather than guidelines, and a resolution of ownership issues are needed. Public access to water information should be improved, including periodic State of Water reports aimed at the public. The region requires a Water Strategy, leadership on the issue (perhaps through a community board), improved communication, and more action and funding by all levels of government to protect and conserve water resources.

Summary

Each Focus Group was able to identify specific actions that could be taken to address the issues identified. In late spring when all the initial Community Forums have been completed, the Minas Basin Working Group will be holding discussions with those people who identified themselves as the leads for each Focus Group. The purpose of these discussions will be to developing strategies to implement these actions.

I. FORUM PLANNING PROCESS

Objectives

The goal of the Community Forums is to initiate real actions toward sustainable management of the natural and human resources of the Minas Basin Watershed. The Forums will build on past initiatives by government and non-government organizations that have been aimed at identifying issues of concern to the residents of the Watershed.

Forum Co-hosts

Two local co-hosts were invited by the Minas Basin Working Group to aid in the logistical planning of the workshops. Local groups were chosen to provide valuable information about the community, and how to engage local citizens and groups to attend. In the end, the three co-hosts of the Forum were:

- Minas Basin Working Group of BoFEP
- Kings County Economic Development Agency
- Valley Watershed Stewardship Association

Organizing Committee

The organizing committee consisted of Sherri Jackson, a Development Officer at the Kings Community Economic Development Agency; Reg Newell, a board member of the Valley Watershed Stewardship Association; Mike Brylinksy, Vice Chair of the Minas Basin Working Group of BoFEP and Robin Musselman, Forum Coordinator. The group met twice to organize the logistics of the event. In between meetings, they communicated via email and telephone.

The Forum Structure/Schedule

Initially a full day forum on the weekend was planned by the Minas Basin Working Group, but upon advice from the local co-hosts, this was changed to a weekday evening. Their experience being that more people turned out during weekdays than on weekends. The Forum was therefore set for a Thursday evening and the following schedule was developed by the Minas Basin Working Group:

Time	Event
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Open House
7:00pm – 7:30pm	Introductory Remarks
7:30pm – 9:00pm	Focus Group Sessions
9:00pm – 9:30pm	Wrap Up

Advertising and Invitations

Every group/organization from the Minas Basin Working Groups Database (110) was sent an invitation to participate in the Forum. They were also encouraged to have a display at the Open house portion of the Forum.

Kings Community Economic Development Agency sent out 240 invitations to their members along with 160 invitations to the members of the Valley Watershed Stewardship Association.

Ministers of Environment and Labour and Natural Resources were sent individual letters inviting them, as were Mayors and Councillors from Kings and West Hants Counties. The chiefs of the Annapolis Valley and Glooscap first nations were also sent letters and invitations.

Advertising was done through papers, newsletters, radio stations, web sites and list serves. Below is a list of where media releases and public service announcements were sent.

Newspapers:

- Kentville Advertiser
- Chronicle Herald
- Hants Journal
- Daily News
- Berwick Register

Radio:

- CFAB AM (Windsor)
- CBC (Radio One programs)
- AVR (Valley)

Cable and Television Companies:

- Milford Cable
- Windsor Cable
- Access Cable (Mt. Uniacke)
- East Link Community Television (Windsor, Berwick)
- Shaw Communications (Kentville)
- Cross Country TV Ltd. (Canning)
- Global Television
- ATV/ASN

Newsletters:

- Hants Community Post Newsletter
- What's Going on Newsletter

Web Sites:

- Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership

List Serves:

- Fundy Forum
- AZICS
- Nova Scotia Naturalists

An article was written in the Kentville Advertiser and in the Chronicle Herald. A follow up article was written in the Regional Newspaper, an insert of the Kentville Advertiser.

***See Appendices for these Articles*

***See also Appendices for copies of:*

- *Flyer/Invitations*
- *Media Release*
- *Public Service Announcement*
- *Letters to ministers, mayors and first nations*

II. RESULTS OF FORUM

Registration

Everyone whom attended was asked to register so we could have a record of who attended and also be able to mail them the executive summary from the workshop. There were over 100 people registered. These included those who had displays at the Open House.

***See Appendices for a list of participants.*

Registration Package contained:

All registrants received a registration package containing:

- Brochures on all three Co-hosts
- Invitation to next Community Forum in Truro
- Comment/Feedback Form
- Issues List (with 3 coloured dots)
- Thank you and Follow up notice
- Map of Minas Basin Watershed

***See Appendices for copies of these forms.*

Open House

Twenty-three groups/organizations had displays at the Open House portion of the Forum. They ranged from posters, brochures to large panelled displays. Below is a list of all the groups that participated in the Open House.

Groups with Displays at Minas Basin Community Forum - Wolfville

Group/Organization	Contact
Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research	Graham Daborn
Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP)	Jon Percy
Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre	Pam Comeau
Black River Lakes Association	Arnold Forsythe
DFO – Marine Protected Areas	Maria Buzeta
Eastern Habitat Joint Venture	Reg Newell
Ecology Action Centre	Tony Bowron
Friends of the Cornwallis River Society	Peter Bagnell
Fundy Biosphere Initiative	Munju Ravindra
Fundy Forum (poster)	Maxine Westhead
Going Green	Peggy Hope-Simpson
Gulf of Maine Council	Pat Hinch
Hants Shore Concerned Citizens Action Group	Betty States
Kings County Trails Association	June Coull
MIDI (poster)	Maxine Westhead
Minas Basin Pulp and Power	
Minas Basin Working Group of BoFEP	Maxine Westhead/Robin Musselman
Nature Conservancy of Canada	Denise Roy
North Mountain Old Forest Restoration Association	Delancy Bishop
Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries – Inland Fisheries Division	Bill Whitman
Nova Scotia Department of the Environment	Linda Redmond
Valley Watershed Stewardship Association	Reg Newell

Introductory Remarks

Dr. Graham Daborn, Chair of BoFEP and member of the Minas Basin Working Group of BoFEP made a half hour introductory presentation on BoFEP, the Minas Basin Working Group and the goals and objectives of the Forum.

***See Appendices for copy of presentation*

Issue Identification Process

In their registration package they were given three dots (red, yellow and blue). Red was for their issue of greatest priority, yellow for second and blue for third. Participants were asked to place their coloured dots on the issues sheets under the issues they were most concerned about. They could also write down in the extra spaces the issues they were concerned about that were not identified already. The results of this exercise are summarized below.

Issue Sheets Summary for Minas Basin Community Forum - Wolf ville

Issue	Number of Dots			
	Priority #1	Priority #2	Priority #3	Total
Agricultural Practices	14	30	16	60
Bioinvasions	2	0	1	3
Coastal Access	2	1	12	15
Coastal Effects of Climate Change	2	6	16	24
Development	13	11	8	32
Fisheries Management	6	6	6	18
Forestry Practices	17	13	17	47
Mining	0	1	1	2
Sewage Treatment/Water Quality	36	13	5	54
Solid Waste Management	2	5	6	13
Tourism	0	4	4	8
Issues Added:				
<i>Biodiversity and Health</i>	1	2	0	3
<i>Detrimental Soil Changes (from Agricultural Sprays and Fertilizers)</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Toxins from Anti-fouling Paint Products</i>	0	1	0	1
<i>Ship/Watercraft Sewage and Waste</i>	0	0	1	1

From the Issue identification sheet, five Focus groups were established. They were; Agricultural Practices, Development, Fisheries Management, Forestry Practices and Sewage Treatment /Water Quality.

Focus Groups

Process:

Within the focus groups, a member of the Minas Basin Working Group was chosen to be a Group Coordinator. Their responsibilities were to make sure the Focus Group ran smoothly. They were given a task sheet to help with the process. See Below.

Focus Group Coordinator Task Sheet

Focus Group time allotted is 1.5 hours

TASKS:

1. Introductions
2. Briefly discuss goal of Focus Group
3. Pass around Sign up Sheet (*enclosed*)
4. Identify Facilitator (if no one volunteers assume role yourself)
5. Identify Recorder/Time keeper
6. Identify Spokesperson/Presenter

7. Discuss/Answer the Following Questions:
 - a. What is the issue of concern?
 - b. How do we address this issue?
 - c. Who wants to be involved? (make sure they check box on sign up sheet)
 - d. Identify lead for group? (make sure leads name is on sign up sheet)
 - e. Identify who else needs to be involved?
 - f. What are the next steps to be taken?
 - g. What do we need? (resources etc.)

8. Wrap up and prepare for presentation

Summary of Focus Group Discussions:

Listed below is the information gathered from each Focus Group including participants and a summary of discussions.

Focus Group: Agriculture

Coordinator: Mike Brylinsky

Facilitator: Linda Redmond

Recorder: Richard Hennigar

Reporter: Alex DeNicola

Lead Identified: Richard Henniger (possibly)

Participants:

Alex DeNicola

Edith Haliburton

Mike Brylinsky

Andrew Gillis

Graham Fisher

Peggy Hope-Simpson

Angela Bond

Greg Bezanson

Richard Hennigar*

Bill Swetam

James Ferguson*

Robin Whidden

Brian Newcombe

Keith Casey

Roger Blatt

Don Conrad

Linda Redmond

**indicated they would be interested in participating in action group on this topic*

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

(notes compiled by Mike Brylinsky)

1.0 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES:

Livestock Management

Monoculture vs. Traditional (Mixed) Agriculture

Impacts of Agriculture on Wildlife Habitat

Ownership (Large Corporations)

Survival of Small and Medium Farms

Genetically Modified Organisms

Protection of Watershed Area

Water Quality and Quantity

Waste Management (Nutrients)

Preservation (Sustainability) of Agriculture
Soil Conservation
Chemical Usage/Contamination
Impacts on Global Warming (Fossil Fuel Consumption/Transportation/Chemicals)
Impacts of Global Warming
Marketing

2.0 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS:

Waste Management (Nutrients)

Control of Manure Run-off
Reduction of Excess Nutrient Leaching
Reduction of Loss of Nutrients into Atmosphere
Reduction of Soil Erosion (P)
Better Manure Storage and Application Procedures
More Composting of Manure

Soil Conservation

Better Tillage Practices
Increase Soil Organic Matter
Size of Fields
Reduce Soil Erosion due to unrestricted access of Cattle to Streams
Better Riparian Zone Management
Reduce Fallowing
Use Crop Rotations

Chemical Usage/Contamination

Pest Monitoring
Integrated Pest Management
Identify Sources of Contamination

Wildlife Habitat

Riparian Zone Management
Preservation of Wetlands

3.0 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:

Need of Government to Provide Incentives
More Education (Opportunities to Learn)
More Community Involvement in Dealing with Issues
More Research at Universities and Colleges
Development and Enforcement of BMPs
Development of a 'Land Ethic'
Transformation of Consciousness
Collect Information, Clarify Problems, Identify Steps to be Make it Realistically Happen

4.0 HOW TO IMPLEMENT:

Use Existing Organizations

Provide Funding
Unite Like-Minded Groups/Individuals and Strengthen Networking
Provide leadership Role to Educate
Motivate Those with an Environmental Interest (give a personal reason to participate)
Develop Action Plans

Focus Group: Development

Coordinator: Jon Percy

Facilitator: Robin Marshall

Recorder: Tony Bowron

Reporter: Jon Percy

Lead Identified: Tony Bowron (possibly)

Participants:

Britt Roscoe	John MacLachlan*	Scott Brown*
Brogan Anderson*	Jon Percy	Sue Bissix
Dan Kustudich*	Karen Beazley*	Suzie Blatt
Gloria Shanks	Lousie Watson*	Tom Herman*
Glyn Bissix*	Madonna Spinazola	Tony Bowron*
Gordon Haliburton*	Munju Ravindra*	Vicky Stiles
John Janmaat	Robin Marshall*	

**indicated they would be interested in participating in action group on this topic*

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

(notes compiled by Jon Percy)

1.0 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES:

Eastern Kings County is one of the fastest growing regions of the province, outside of Metro Halifax. Understandably there is considerable concern about the direction and pace of this growth, particularly among those who originally moved to the area because of its more rural ambience. Improved access resulting from the planned upgrade of the highway link with the Halifax metro area will undoubtedly increase the pace of this growth even more.

There was some discussion in the group about the exact meaning of the term “development” as it means different things to different people. It was generally agreed that growth/development is probably inevitable and that this is not necessarily a bad thing in itself. Development can be positive and involve improvements in the quality of life of residents. It was pointed out that the original French root of the word develop implies an unwrapping or an unfolding. In this sense it implies unfolding of a plan and an evolution towards something that is hopefully positive.

One of the main concerns of the group is the way that “development” is presently unfolding in the region. It is felt that the principal driving force is economics and money and that little attention is paid to the question of the broader aspects of quality of life of

the residents. All too often development is guided solely by the desire of local officials to expand the residential and business tax base in the community as rapidly as they can. They regard this expansion in population and economic activity as the principal criterion of their success as community leaders. Participants felt that we also have to take into account the need to improve the quality of life and not just increase growth for the sake of growth. We have to move away from an overemphasis on tax generating growth towards a planning process that emphasizes sustainable development. There needs to be a move away from the present short-term economics driven planning towards a longer term planning process with a broader outlook.

One of the difficulties in changing the direction of current development activities is that they tend to “privatize the profits and commonize the costs”. In other words, the benefits flow to a few and the negative impacts are thinly spread over many. In most development projects a relatively small number of people stand to gain a great deal of profit from the venture and thus have a high degree of motivation to implement it. However, often large numbers of people are negatively affected or inconvenienced by the development project, but only to a relatively small degree individually. They are not sufficiently affected as individuals to actively oppose the project and it is hard to motivate them to take a stand. Thus their quality of life is incrementally reduced over time without them really being aware of it happening.

We need to look at ways of evolving as a complete community, not just as an economic entity. This means that we need to manage development on a broader scale and over a longer term, not just in the piecemeal short-term manner that now occurs. The negative impacts of development have to be identified and evaluated and where possible eliminated or reduced. We need to focus more on assessing both the positive and negative aspects of development using broader criteria of measurement. Local governments should be doing an honest assessment of development that considers the value of all ecosystem components, not just the tax-based components. At present we are not measuring the full impacts of development because we consider economic indicators almost exclusively.

2.0 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:

There is great concern that there is not an adequate or effective system for protecting land from inappropriate developments. The conversion of farmland to golf courses or put to other non-agricultural uses was cited as one problem area. There is great need for ecologically and socially sustainable land use planning, not just economically viable. More generally it was felt that it has to be widely recognized that “non-development” of some areas may be a positive benefit to the whole community. There are not enough properly protected terrestrial and marine areas to protect native animal and plant species and ensure conservation of biodiversity. There needs to be a systematic plan to protect ecological integrity and the functioning of critical ecosystem processes. We have to consider the value of “ecosystem services” in our long-term planning. Provision also has to be made for continued and expanded access to coastal areas and undeveloped areas for low-impact recreational use.

More areas need to be “set aside” and protected from development. However, it was emphasized that simply establishing protected areas is not enough. They have to be viewed as an integral part of the whole landscape development and planning process. The role of the “working landscape” of the region also has to be considered. It could be that some important ecological processes/services or valued ecosystem components could be protected within a working landscape. In potential protected areas we need to identify and protect life-sustaining ecological processes.

One difficulty is that large areas of the province are privately owned and only a small proportion is crown or public land. A high value is placed on the private ownership of land in the area. Thus to protect some sensitive or valued landscapes it may be necessary to consider purchase, lease or developing easements on these areas by communities or land trust groups. We need to define more precisely what elements in the natural landscape we particularly value and then work to shield those elements from the adverse impacts of development in the region. We also need to investigate ways to more efficiently use the available land to meet social, ecological and economic needs.

In order to protect our quality of life well into the future we as citizens have to take some responsibility by participating in the planning process. We need to “find our voice and use it”. A great deal has to be done in educating ourselves and our fellow citizens about the nature and scope of the problem and what might be viable solutions to work towards. Public education, communication and consultation should be an integral part of the planning process. We also need better planning of land management and more effort needs to be devoted to assessment and measurement of the impacts of development.

3.0 WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED:

This is a complex problem and many groups and individuals will have to be involved in finding and implementing solutions. Different players will have to be involved in the different aspects of the issue. These players include governments at all levels, larger business enterprises such as Minas Basin Pulp and power and Michelin Tire. There is also a role for academics and students. Groups such as the Nature Conservancy, community health board and local Recreation associations also need to be involved. We also need to include forestry and agricultural groups in the discussion.

4.0 HOW TO IMPLEMENT:

A first step would be to identify all those areas that are particularly valued by the community, particularly any that are presently threatened. Groups such as the Blomidon Naturalists, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Nature Trust chapter in Kings Co. could be helpful in this task. There is also a need to spread the word about the issue among our neighbours and co-workers. To do this we need to develop a sound communications and education strategy involving the creation of educational material such as pamphlets, fact sheets, newsletter and even a web site. The biggest difficulty will be finding volunteers who are not already stretched too thin.

Focus Group: Fisheries Management

Coordinator: Barry Jones

Facilitator: Bill Whitman

Recorder: Jamie Gibson

Reporter: D. Scott Cook

Lead identified: Jamie Gibson

Participants:

Barry Jones

Bill Whitman*

D. Scott Cook*

Jamie Gibson*

Pam Comeau*

Paul MacKay*

Reginald Walsh*

**indicated they would be interested in participating in action group on this topic*

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

(notes compiled by Jamie Gibson)

There were seven people in this discussion group. Most of the discussion focused around the issues of fisheries management, defining the relationship between DFO and user groups, information exchange and who should assume the responsibility for funding fisheries management and conservation.

1.0 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES:

1.1 Status of Resources: Historical and Present

The status of fish and fishery resources around the Minas Basin is not well understood. Some fisheries that were once important no longer exist, and the viability and potential of existing fisheries appears to be unknown. Management is reactive, not proactive. When evaluating the status of fishery resources, the status historically should be considered so that targets can include the potential of a fishery could be developed. Where stocks are at low levels, maintaining the status quo should not be the management objective, and do not meet ecosystem objectives.

1.2 Ecosystem Objectives Necessary

Fisheries management needs to consider ecosystem-level impacts and objectives. This is mandated under the Oceans Act, but not often practiced. Objectives must be quantifiable so that the effectiveness of management initiatives can be evaluated.

1.3 Definition of the Roles of Government and User Groups

Much of the discussion focused on the relationship between government (mainly DFO) and user groups, and the exchange of information between groups. Availability of information about stock status, water and habitat quality and other issues needs to be available in a manner that is free, timely, and transparent. Data should be in the public domain.

1.4 Fish Habitat and Habitat Restoration

As well as the status of fisheries resources, the status of fish habitat needs to be inventoried. The resulting database could be used to prioritise habitat for conservation, protection and restoration.

1.5 Importance of Community Input and Information from Fishers

The group felt that input from the community and fishers was not adequately included in fisheries assessment and management.

1.6 Economic Viability of Fisheries and Community Impacts

Notwithstanding the need for ecosystem level objectives, fisheries need to be economically viable (some quotas are so low that fishing is not worthwhile). When fisheries collapse, there are community impacts that extend beyond the fishers. Links between fisheries and communities need to be identified and included when assessing the importance of a fishery.

1.7 Resources for Management

The issue of funding for resource management was a recurring theme throughout the discussion. Some member of the group thought that this should be primarily DFO's (or government) responsibility, while others thought that vested interest groups should assist with funding. Where fishers and community groups play a role in data collection and assessments, the costs of fishery management potentially can be reduced.

2.0 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:

The issues above should be addressed through an integrated resource management strategy involving government, stakeholders and community groups. To facilitate the development of this strategy, a working group should be developed to:

2.1 Identify stakeholders

As a first step, stakeholders should be identified. These include fishers, government, community groups, non-governmental organizations and non-fishing industries that affect fish, fish habitat and water quality, as well as others. The group agreed that many people affected by fisheries and water management are not members of groups. The strategy should therefore include a way input from individuals to be included, although further discussion is required to determine how this should be achieved.

2.2 Leadership and the Role of Government (DFO)

An organization or group to take the lead role needs to be identified. If this is not DFO, then the relationship between DFO, other governmental organizations and the group needs to be established.

2.3 Identify Sources of Funding

2.4 Facilitate Information Exchange

Members of the discussion group expressed frustration when attempting to obtain data and information from DFO and other governmental organizations. Facilitating information exchange should be a high priority.

3. 0 WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED:

- fishers
- government
- community groups
- non-governmental organizations and academic institutions
- non-fishing industries that affect fish, fish habitat and water quality
- individuals?

4. 0 HOW TO IMPLEMENT:

The BoFEP Minas Basin Working Group has put together a proposal to examine the feasibility of integrated fisheries management in the Minas Basin. If approved, this could be a starting point for the above actions.

Focus Group: Forestry Practices

Coordinator: Pat Hinch

Facilitator: Lorraine McQueen

Recorder: Maxine Westhead

Reporter: Maxine Westhead

Lead Identified: none

Participants:

Brenda Davidson	John Connor	Pat Hinch
Cameron McQueen*	Keiko Lui*	Suzan Hauer
David Hope-Simpson	Lorna Gillis	Scott Burbidge
Delancey Bishop*	Lorraine McQueen*	Susan Gore
Jim Wolford	Maxine Westhead	Reg Newell
Joan Bromley*	Michele Kustudich	
John Abati*	Oscar Huntley	

**indicated they would be interested in participating in action group on this topic*

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

(notes compiled by Pat Hinch and Maxine Westhead)

1.0 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES:

- Sustainability (ecological and economic - all- water, recreational, health, spiritual, habitat, employment) - rate of cutting
- Deforestation (cutting methods including clear cutting - results/effects
- Land ownership
- Provincial forestry policy - need a better understanding of any provincial policies (trees more than products)
- Who are the forests for? - who is benefiting from it? (human and non-human)
- Reforestation (rate of, effective?)
- Stewardship (public& personal)
- Education

2.0 WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED:

- Corporations (including end users)
- Municipalities - all levels of government
- *Land owners
- Citizens
- All
- Industries
- End users/consumers
- Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq
- Ecology and Environmental Groups (EAC, NSEN, NGOs)

3.0 RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Current maps, inventory - type information
- Identify best practices
- Learning from other areas (partnerships that have worked, etc.)
- Improvement in Legislation (also end goal)
- Genuine Progress Index (GPI)
- Education
- Product inventory
- how much is exported / in what form?
- getting a clear "big picture"
- Woodlot owners and organizations
- Existing networks/structures
- Rebels and activists
- Paradigm shift
- Education/publicity
- Keep using/use political process
- Stewardship
- Youth - teach them about political process
- Maritime Lumber Bureau has guidelines
- Provincial government
- \$\$\$

4.0 HOW TO IMPLEMENT:

- Conference/meeting with all key players identified (2 yrs)
- consensus and actions
- Brief inventory/understanding of current forestry groups/activities (1 yr)
- Identify/create incentive programs (\$, publicity, taxes, etc.) - look at examples in Ontario (1 yr)
- Improved legislation (1 yr)

Focus Group: Sewage Treatment/Water Quality

Coordinator: Peter Wells

Facilitator: Terry Hennigar

Recorder: Denise Roy

Reporter: Peter Wells

Lead Identified: None

Participants:

Alex Levy	Garfield Whitman*	Clint MacInnes
Arnold Forsythe*	Gary Cochrane*	Peter Bagnell*
David Stiles	Greg MacLellan*	Peter Wells
Delmar Jordan*	Gregg Morrison	Ralph Burt*
Denise Roy	James Borden	Richard Skinner
Donald Hendricks*	Karen MacLellan*	Ted Stoddart
Doug Morse	Katherine Wile	Terry Henniger
Earle Illsley	Keith Fuller	
Elaine Hendricks*	Kevin Blair	

**indicated they would be interested in participating in action group on this topic*

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

(notes compiled by Peter Wells)

There were approx. 30 people in this group. There was vigorous and at times impassioned discussion around the guiding questions. Everyone participated. The raw notes have been reorganized for logic and clarity. Major discussion points as recalled i.e. the opinions expressed by the group, are supplemented with text wherever possible. The points are not listed in priority within a topic. It was decided early in the discussion that the sewage issue was very important but was one part of the broader water issue; the group decided to stay with the broader view of issues and needs.

1.0 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES:

1.1 Surface Water – Quantity and Quality

- Source identification of pathogens and contaminants
- Influences/sources of contaminants
- Quality parameters of concern.

[A systematic description of the sources of contaminants and other threats, such as pathogens from agricultural operations, that enter or potentially enter water – fresh and salt – is needed for the watershed around Minas Basin. The effects they are having or could have to aquatic resources should be documented; sewage and municipal effluent was discussed in this context. A listing of water quality parameters that are important to the watershed should be provided to citizens and used as a guide to monitoring water quality. A Minas Basin Water Report for the watershed is needed, covering quality and quantity, as well as fresh, estuarine and marine waters.]

1.2 Ground Water – Quantity and Quality

- Capacity/quantity/quality of groundwater.

- Need for mapping the aquifers (groundwater)
- [There are many concerns about the state of the groundwater, from threats to its quality to the need to know the location and capacity of the primary aquifers. The feeling was that farm operations, especially big operations, were damaging groundwater, through the seepage of manure and chemicals. The group supported the idea for a preparation of a thorough overview of groundwater in the Minas Basin region.]

1.3 Legal Questions

- Enforcement and Improvement of enforcement
- Need for standards (regulations and monitoring)
- Ownership of water resource.
- Commercial use of water (exports).

[It was considered by some that there was enough legislation, federal and provincial, to protect water supplies for drinking and agriculture, from surface and aquifers sources, but that the legislation is not being utilized efficiently. There is a need for standards, rather than just relying on the CCME guidelines. Ownership issues are becoming important, as there are local bottling operations and the products are exported. Above all, political and agency will is needed to use the law where necessary to protect water.]

1.4 Information and Education

- Assessment documents (lots of data but lack of information)
- Education/public awareness

[The public requires access to the various databases on water quantity and quality, mostly held by government departments. Most importantly, they need assurance that the data are being moved into information reports; the group discussed the need for State of the Environment – State of Water reports at length. These reports would be important to the continued need to educate the wider public about water issues, and raise public consciousness about the water issue(s). The reports would also be valuable in the schools.]

1.5 Future Needs

- Water Conservation Strategies – future strategies, all uses.
- Need for environmental assessments (old and new projects)
- Future development; re Highway 101.

[The region needs a Water Strategy to guide the use and protection of this valuable resource; without one, all activities such as above are done in a vacuum. There is a need to have formal environmental assessments (EIAs) of all projects affecting water resources, including on some already established projects (e.g. industries). There is a real concern expressed about the influence of future development of the region, for homes and industry, on the water resources; an example is the new highway 101 as it is twinned down to and down the Annapolis Valley.]

2.0 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:

2.1 Leadership

- Who should lead
- Where to show the leadership
- Community based leadership

[The water issue requires new and invigorated leadership if the above issues are to be addressed and resolved satisfactorily. There was dissatisfaction with the provincial leadership on this issue, and recognition that the federal government no longer has the capacity to lead (given the Inland Waters Directorate – Environment Canada demise in the early 1990s). Some form of community board, with powers, would be best, to show leadership and direction on all water issues.]

2.2 Communication

- Links between community groups and law makers (govts.)
- Better communications between communities and government.

[Communication on water issues and activities, across the communities around Minas Basin, is essential. More communication between communities and government(s), including the legal branches, is required. The communities want assurance that they know the state of the water resources and that they are being managed and protected appropriately.]

2.3 The Water Issues

- Prioritization of issues.
- Clarification of issues.

[The issues need further in-depth discussion and some priority given to them and the ensuing actions. The priority issues from the community perspective will be clearer from all of the workshops (my comment), but also from the exercise of preparing a State of Water report for the watershed. Everyone felt they would benefit from more detailed and prepared discussion of the water issues, and that this would influence the priorities in the “water agenda”.]

2.4 The Law

- Use existing laws.
- Clarify boundaries of jurisdiction.
- Better coordination of different levels of government.
- Protection of people who speak out.

[The group felt strongly about applying existing laws to protect and conserve water resources. They felt that the federal-provincial-municipal jurisdictional responsibilities and issues needed clarification, and should not lead to further delay on the actions. Government agencies should work more cooperatively on this issue. People should be informed as to how this is proceeding. In particular, water specialists or others who speak out on water issues should not be penalized, as was the case recently in Canada on health i.e. drug, issues.]

2.5 Resources

- Funding/people

[The water issue needs serious funding from governments for programs, as well as for the personnel hiring/re-staffing of water groups previously reduced by budgetary cutbacks. The “capacity issue” i.e. our collective capability in the province to deal with water issues, was considered very serious.]

3.0 WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED:

3.1 Who’s involved?

- Community stewardship board.
- Improve government-will and citizen-will to act on issues.
- NGOs, all levels of government.
- Include all parties in these groups.

[There needs to be a coalition of efforts on this issue. Formation of a Community Water Board (s) should be considered, with representatives from all stakeholders, and ensuring that citizens are directly involved in water issues and their resolution and long-term care.]

3.2 Moving the Message

- Produce good documents on WQ but whom should they go to, and will they make a difference?
- Get credible messages on the WQ issue “out” to governments, etc.

[This is a communications need. The message of community concern about water issues should be moved to governments, as well as wide distribution and discussion of the Water Report(s) once they are produced.]

4.0 NEXT STEPS:

- Use coalition of existing groups (i.e. have a united voice).
- Work together.
- Review existing models to apply in this situation i.e. other citizen groups elsewhere in Canada have dealt with similar issues, so learn from their experiences.
- Education.
- Review/interpret existing water quality/quantity data (i.e. prepare the water report(s)).
- Use of report cards (i.e. how well or not we are doing on each water issue, in the watershed).

[The six points were considered to be the starting point for action on this sewage/water quality issue in the Minas Basin watershed. Details need to be worked out.]

RAW NOTES:

1.0 Issues

- Quality parameters of concern.
- Influences/sources of contaminants
- Future development; re Highway 101.
- Need for standards (regulations and monitoring)

- Enforcement
- Assessment documents (lots of data but lack of information)
- Ownership of water resource.
- Capacity/quantity/quality of groundwater.
- Need for mapping the aquifers (groundwater)
- Need for environmental assessments (old and new projects)
- Education/public awareness
- Enforcement
- Water Conservation Strategies – future strategies, all uses.
- Commercial use of water (exports).
- Source identification of pathogens and contaminants
- Improvement of enforcement

2.0 Actions

- Where to show the leadership
- Who should lead
- Protection of people who speak out
- Community based leadership
- Links between community groups and law makers (govts.).
- Use existing laws

3.0 Addressing the Issues

- Better communications between communities and government.
- Clarify boundaries of jurisdiction.
- Better coordination of different levels of government
- Funding/people.

4.0 Involvement

- NGOs, all levels of government.
- Improve government-will and citizen-will to act on issues.
- Produce good documents on WQ but whom should they go to, and will they make a difference?
- Get credible messages on the WQ issue “out” to governments, etc.
- Community stewardship board.
- Include all parties in these groups.

5.0 What next?

- Education.
- Use of report cards.
- Review/interpret existing data.
- Use coalition of existing groups (united voice).
- Work together.
- Review existing models to apply in this situation.

6.0 How to Address the Issues

- Prioritization of issues.
- Clarification of issues.
- Water quality (issues) (lead to) management (includes/and) research.

Summary

The large number of people who attended the Community Forum indicates there is a lot of concern for the future of the Minas Basin. The Open House was very successful in bringing together individuals and groups working on environmental and socio-economic issues in the Minas Basin Watershed. Given the time limitations, it was not possible to discuss all the issues identified in one evening but it was obvious from the issue identification exercise that questions of water quality, agricultural practices, fisheries management and forestry practices were of greatest concern. The goal of the Focus Group discussions was to outline concrete actions that should be taken in the near future. Again, this was a challenge to do in such a limited amount of time and some may have felt it was not achieved. However, looking over the groups' notes, many specific ideas for action and individuals who could lead the process forward were identified. These actions will help with the next task of meeting with those interested, reviewing the recommendations and developing concrete plans. It was also interesting to note the many common themes that ran through all the discussions. These too may help us in developing action plans and giving us direction for the future.

Common Themes from Focus Groups:

- Most groups discussed the lack of knowledge about current conditions, be it the status of fishery resources or the availability of groundwater. Attention needs to be focused on gathering information about the “state” of our resources as well as the quality of the environment around the Minas Basin Watershed.
- When groups were asked to discuss who should be involved in addressing the issue, most agreed that all players need to be involved from resource users, policy writers to advocates of sustainability. Better communication between these groups was also identified including easier access to information for the public.
- It was discussed in many groups that a united front needs to be established to tackle these issues. We need to gather like-minded people/groups and strengthen networking.
- Lack of resources, specifically funding came up in every group. A big question is where to find the money to undertake these projects and who should be responsible.
- Many groups also touched on the lack of long-term vision and the fact that we need to develop strategies and plans be it for fisheries management, open space protection, development, and water (to name a few). Most importantly, these plans need to be developed by local communities.
- The need for more “education” was touched on by every group. Educating others about sustainable practices including the public, the policy makers and the resource industries.

Follow up:

As mentioned above, each Focus Group was able to identify begin to identify some specific actions that could to be taken to address the issues identified. In late spring when all the initial Community Forums have been completed, the Minas Basin Working Group will be holding discussions with those people who identified themselves as the leads for each Focus Group as well as other interested parties. The purpose of these discussions will be to review the recommendations and develop specific actions and plans to undertake.