



The

# Sandpiper

Winter 2002-2003

Sierra  
Club of  
Canada  
Atlantic Canada Chapter

## Administrative Changes in Sierra Club of Canada

The national Board of Directors of Sierra Club of Canada meets twice a year face-to-face and about four other times a year by conference call. I have represented the Atlantic Canada Chapter on the national Board for almost three years, but now things have changed. I am still on the national Board, and I still bring forward issues from our region, but I no longer represent the Chapter. The national Board has changed to a structure of nine national Board members, who can be from anywhere in the country. The only guaranteed seats on the Board are for two youth under 25 years of age. Currently there are still two of us from Atlantic Canada, myself and Clotilda Yakimchuk from Sydney.

In the spring of 2003 you will receive an election ballot for the national Board. This will be the first time we will hold an election at that level. Three of the nine seats will turn-over, and the new terms will be for three years. The national nominations committee will try and ensure that there is regional diversity on the Board, but ultimately all they can do is put forward the ballot, and it will be up to the members from across Canada to vote in people from different regions.

Up until now I have been able to communicate with the national Board about the Atlantic Canada Chapter's conservation efforts, the Chapter's budget, funding requests, and other issues of concern to the region. From now on this communication will be done through written reports to the Board from the Chapter directly. As long as I am on the Board, I will of course continue to advocate for issues of concern to the region, but this type of representation is not a guaranteed for the Chapter in the future. The Chapter Director is also welcome to attend any meeting that the Chapter chooses to send him or her to.

Overall, this change is for the better. Yes, the communication between the Chapter and the national Board will be modified, but overall the effectiveness of the national Board should improve. Up until now the national Board has only been made up of Chapter and Sierra Youth Coalition (SYC) representatives, many of whom tended to think regionally and not nationally. As the national Board oversees the entire organization, including the national office, having Chapter representatives set direction for the national office has sometimes led to conflicts of interest. For example, at one point the decision was made that 100% of membership dues should go to the Chapters and none be left for the national office. Yet the national office services members with SCAN, welcome letters, renewal notices, etc. The dues allocation has since been improved, but that is an extreme example of why it is important that the national Board think nationally.

The other good thing about this new structure is that now members will have the opportunity to vote directly for the national Board. In the past the Chapters and SYC appointed people. This new election process will improve the democracy within Sierra Club of Canada.

A few other administrative changes have come about in the last little while. We have standardized the logo that the national office, Chapters and Groups use. There is now more focus on capacity building within the organization. And new licensing agreements with the Sierra Club (US) have been put into place. The new agreements formalize the fact that we are an autonomous organization in Canada. We have been a legally separate entity since 1992, but this now formalizes some of the operational autonomy. We now offici-

*Changes* continued on page 2

## Cape Breton Group's First Year a Busy One

The Sierra Club Cape Breton Group has had a busy year in its first year of existence.

The Sierra Club of Canada has worked with the community to broaden the scope of the clean up efforts to include the communities of the North End of Sydney, Ashby and the rest of Whitney Pier, not only the NOCO (North of the Coke Ovens) area (Frederick, Tupper and Laurier Streets). We have promoted the demand by residents in contaminated homes for a voluntary buyout as well as remediation as an option.

Working with the Peoples Health Commission, we conducted a door to door health survey targeting approximately 1100 homes in the vicinity of Sydney Steel. The survey employed a questionnaire that took one to one and a half hours to complete. It looks at medical history, occupational history, reproductive outcomes, residential history, lifestyle and a number of other factors to determine the state of health of the population closest to the plant.

With the assistance of a summer student, an intern volunteer, retired nurse volunteers, and many other community volunteers, we have completed 300 surveys to date. We were welcomed by most respondents, who felt that government was not telling the whole truth and that we might be able to help.

The large volume of data collected is currently being coded and entered into a database by Paul Shreenan, Atlantic Canada Chapter Treasurer and Co-Chair, and by Tim Lambert, Associate Professor at the University of Calgary and chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Panel of the PHC.

The results of the analysis should be com-

*Cape Breton* continued on page 2

ally set our own conservation policy for Canadian issues, and work with the Sierra Club (US) to jointly create international conservation policy. We now service Canadian members in Canada only. This change has been coming into place since 1996, but it is formalized in these recent agreements. One change that is still to come is that we will no longer give Sierra Magazine automatically with Canadian memberships. Canadians can get the magazine through their SCC membership, but will have to pay extra. We can still access trainings in the US, but it is not guaranteed that they will fund our participation, though they can if they so choose.

The new focus on capacity building is an area where I have been putting a lot of effort in the past couple of years. The national organization now does a strategic planning process. We are currently fundraising to improve the management structure in the national office and the organization on a whole. Part of this improved management will also include a greater focus on membership development and training. We are trying to put the pieces in place to help the organization become more financially stable, with more predictable funding. This will take years to accomplish, but at least we have made it a priority.

With all the focus of this article on administration, I must end by reassuring you that conservation is still our top priority and always will be. (Conservation is the Sierra Club word for campaigns, environmental education, political pressure, grassroots activism, pushing for protected areas, creating legislative change, etc.) The 2003 priority areas for the national office are (in no particular order): 1. Biodiversity Protection: (a) Forests, (b) Endangered Species, (c) Oceans; 2. Health and the Environment: (a) Pesticides/Toxics, (b) Biotechnology, (c) Sydney Tar Ponds; 3. Atmosphere and Energy: (a) Climate Change, (b) Air Pollution, (c) Energy Onslaught, (e) Nuclear Power and CANDU exports; 4. Transition to a Sustainable Economy: (a) Population and the Environment, (b) Trade and the Environment. 5. Special Projects: Plans for an Ottawa-based "Earth Embassy."

Amelia Clarke, SCC Board Member

If you have any questions or comments feel free to contact Amelia at [Amelia.clarke@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:Amelia.clarke@mail.mcgill.ca)

pleted in several months. This project is a huge undertaking for a volunteer organization and everyone involved deserves our gratitude for an important job well done.

In late August we conducted dust sampling for lead and arsenic in 45 homes in the three neighbourhoods surrounding the Sysco site. The dust survey is attempting to determine if there is a pattern of migration of these contaminants from the outside environment into homes. We hope we can establish the need to extend the remediation to all the affected neighbourhoods.

The analysis of the lab results is ongoing and should be completed soon by Tim Lambert and Stephanie Lane, our student intern volunteer. We hope to have the results published in a peer reviewed journal soon. The results will be shared with the individual homeowners before we release them to the public. The preliminary results show that it has been a worthwhile exercise.

Some of our members in Saint Anne's have taken an action in the federal court to stop a huge 1200-acre mussel farm from devastating beautiful Saint Anne's Bay on the Bras D'Or Lakes.

Caroline DiCocco, MPP for Sarnia Lambton, Ontario visited the SYSCO site in late December. She is very concerned about the contents of the Domtar tank that are being sent by truck in February-March to be landfilled untreated in rural Ontario. The tank contains 3,800 tonnes of tars and PAH's, heavy metals and small quantities of PCBs. By lowering its environmental standards Ontario has allowed wastes that could not be disposed of in this manner in other jurisdictions to flood in and be landfilled in an unlined dump not equipped with a leachate collection system. The lax laws in Ontario coupled with "self policing" means there is very little public scrutiny of the landfill, which is owned by Clean Harbours. It has already begun to leak and a large expansion is underway.

The Sierra Club does not feel that sending untreated waste to a community that has inadequate laws is an acceptable solution. The Cape Breton Group and campaigner Maureen Reilly, from the Eastern Canada Chapter, are working with those concerned from Sarnia to find a just and equitable solution to the disposal of the contents of the Domtar tank.

There are safe effective technologies that can deal with the most of the waste in the tar ponds and the coke ovens site that are not getting serious consideration by the consul-

tants who are shaping the choices to be presented shortly to the public in Cape Breton.

The Sierra Club Cape Breton Group is starting a petition asking the federal minister of Environment to begin a full panel review of the proposed clean-up that will look at all the options for a safe, effective and economically responsible solution. The petition drive will run for the first four months of 2003.

Bruno Marcocchio, National Conservation Campaigner

## **The Atlantic Canada Chapter Joins the Tobeatic Protection Alliance**

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter joined the Tobeatic Protection Alliance (TOPA) in the fall of 2000. Other members of the alliance include the Tobeatic Wilderness Committee, Tusket River Environmental Protection Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Digby East Fish and Game Association, Annapolis Field Naturalists, and South Shore Paddlers. The purpose of this coalition is to protect the Tobeatic Wilderness Area, which is the largest protected area in the Maritimes. It is also the first of Nova Scotia's 31 protected areas to begin the arduous process of fashioning a comprehensive management plan. Two major issues are now in focus: the Black Bull Quartz Mine in Yarmouth County and ATV use in wilderness areas.

These issues explain why an existing protected area needs an alliance to protect it.

### **The Black Bull Quartz Mine, Yarmouth County**

On September 6, 2002, Nova Scotia's Department of Environment and Labour (DEL) granted conditional approval for a proposed quartz mine on the Tobeatic's southern boundary. The approval was made despite evidence uncovered by TOPA that a crucial part of the scientific information provided by the proponent was flawed and despite concerns expressed by government

staff about potential impacts on the adjacent wilderness area and Clyde River watershed.

TOPA twice presented their concerns about water drawdown to DEL, first through public input in the environmental



A "souped up" ATV literally on display at a Sobey's in Halifax. Photo: Paul Shreenan

assessment process and again at a meeting with the Environmental Assessment Branch on December 10, 2002. On both occasions

DEL expressed satisfaction that all environmental concerns could be addressed through monitoring programs. Monitoring, mitigation and compensation will not protect this wilderness. By the time negative impacts are noticed, the damage has already

been done. The main basis for TOPA's concern is that the hydrology study contains insufficient data inputs on water drawdown. Consequently, the monitoring program derived from these data will be flawed. Garbage in, garbage out!

### ATVs in Wilderness Areas

There has been very strong political pressure from ATV user groups to gain unprecedented access into wilderness areas. DEL is in the process of preparing a Directive, which will ask for input from the public about this issue. From these comments, they will make a province-wide policy. TOPA will be asking for all coalition members as well as individuals to prepare statements demanding no recreational ATV use in wilderness areas. Unfortunately, the Wilderness Areas Protection Act permits vehicle use with special licences at the Minister's discretion to gain access to camps within wilderness areas.

In addition to the environmental concerns related to recreational ATV use there are very serious safety concerns. The Globe and Mail on February 6th of this year reported the soaring rate of injuries fueled by soaring sales. People between 5 and 19 years of age account for 36% of injuries. Alcohol is implicated in 25% of accidents. In the absence of serious regulations on how and where ATVs are used, these figures are bound to grow.

More information on the Tobeatic is available at: [www.tartannet.ns.ca/~tobeatic](http://www.tartannet.ns.ca/~tobeatic)

Oloibiri and since then millions of barrels of oil and billions of dollars have been taken out of Nigeria's Niger Delta. In 1994, nearly 1.9 million barrels of oil a day were coming out of Nigeria. Shell takes close to a third of that, making Nigeria Shell's third biggest country of oil production. Nigeria is the world's thirteenth largest producer of oil and analysts calculate that Shell is profiting about \$500 million a year from their operations in Nigeria.

The situation would be sad enough if it was only a simple story of corrupt governments and oil companies stealing all of the oil wealth and leaving the population to live in poverty. The situation is actually much worse due to the fact that the oil companies are not taking all of the oil. Sadly they are spilling millions of barrels worth in the creeks and rivers and on the farmland, every year leaving the impoverished people with only polluted water to drink and farmland literally covered in oil where nothing will grow. One of countless examples happened in June 1998 when a 16-inch Shell pipeline burst and was allowed to spill an estimated 800,000 barrels of oil into the village of Ijaw. The oil poisoned the village's water supply but since there was no other water people drank it anyway causing many people to get sick and some to die. A year later the oil was still there, thick and brown, covering the ground and collecting on the seashore. No one had ever come to clean it up!

Jason Blanch, Co-Chair

## Nappan In Nigeria

*Jason Blanch, executive director of the Nappan Project in Amherst, Nova Scotia has taken a short leave as Chair of the Atlantic Canada Chapter to fulfill a CIDA contract in Nigeria.*

The Nappan Project has received funding to develop a partnership with an environmental group in Nigeria called Development in Nigeria. This is an environmental group engaged in protecting the natural environment and promoting the rights of people. The first of three trips to Nigeria is coming up in January 2003 and in preparation for this I have been reading about Nigeria, a country of extremes.

One of the extremes I am very excited about is Nigeria's wilderness. Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta, a huge floodplain in South Eastern Nigeria covering 25,640 square kilometres, is one of most biologically

diverse areas on the planet. It has more fresh water fish species than any other coastal system in West Africa and it is home to many of the over 2000 species of birds that are found in West Africa.

Another of the extremes, one which will be much more difficult to face, is the state of life for the average person, poverty. The Niger Delta is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped parts of the country. "Seventy percent of the inhabitants still live in a rural, subsistent existence characterized by a total absence of such basic facilities as electricity, pipe-borne water, hospitals, proper housing and motorable roads. They are weighed down by debilitating poverty, malnutrition, and disease," say Ike Okonta and Orono Douglas in their 2001 book, *Where Vultures Feast*.

The ironic thing is that this same area is one of the most oil rich areas on the planet. In 1956, Shell discovered Oil in the village of

### Sandpiper Winter 2003

**Contributors:** Marilyn Stanton, Amelia Clarke, Mark Dittrick, Paul Shreenan, Jerry Cook, Bruno Marcocchio, Jason Blanch, and the students of Mrs. Grant-Smith's grade 6 class at the Annapolis Royal Regional Academy

#### Contacts:

The Chapter Office:  
[atlanticcanadachapter@sierraclub.ca](mailto:atlanticcanadachapter@sierraclub.ca)

Mark Dittrick, Interim Director:  
[markd@sierraclub.ca](mailto:markd@sierraclub.ca)

Paul Shreenan, Co-Chair: [pshreena@smu.ca](mailto:pshreena@smu.ca)

Jason Blanch, Co-Chair,  
[nappanproject@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:nappanproject@ns.sympatico.ca)

Bruno Marcocchio, National Conservation  
Campaigner, [brunom@syd.eastlink.ca](mailto:brunom@syd.eastlink.ca)

Tony Reddin, Outings Chair, [marionc@isn.net](mailto:marionc@isn.net)

Agi Koller, Secretary, [akoller@is2.dal.ca](mailto:akoller@is2.dal.ca)

Doug MacInley, Cape Breton Group Chair,  
[DouglasMacKinley@yahoo.ca](mailto:DouglasMacKinley@yahoo.ca)

# Rock Around the Clock

Around a year ago, representing the Atlantic Canada Chapter of Sierra Club of Canada, I joined the fight just then getting under way to save Nova Scotia's Digby Neck from the environmental, social and economic ravages of an outsized and ill-conceived mega-quarry. The list of reasons for opposing the Whites Cove basalt quarry (also called the "Tory Quarry" for reasons that are all too obvious) is about as long as any I've seen for any single issue. There's the danger posed to whales, some of which are already the most endangered on earth, and other marine mammals from the blasting and the shipping. Add to that the threat to lobster, scallop, urchin, herring and other fisheries that are worth millions and employ hundreds, not just from the blasting but also from potential invasions of alien marine species brought in the ballast water carried by the ships employed to haul the basalt away. The blasting and extraction of the rock could easily disrupt the local water supply and leave surrounding villages without a drop, except for the precipitous one in the water table. The thriving traditional tourism and ecotourism industries in the area could dry up as well. And that's just the short list. [For a more complete telling of what this quarry will mean to Digby Neck and neighbouring Long Island and Briar Island, read local resident Marilyn Stanton's speech to the Council of Canadians printed below.]

But there's a really awful feature of the Digby Neck quarry that hasn't gotten all that much attention. It's the incessant nature of this terrible project. There will of course be a good deal of dust. And there will be plenty of noise. Not just some of the time, but all of the time! And there will also be all kinds of light—all through the night. Because they're going to be going after that rock right around the clock!

The Nova Scotia-based spokesperson for the large American company behind this outsized and outrageous venture told me during a meeting I attended recently that the quarry would only operate between 6AM and 10PM. However, there is nothing on paper from any government agency or municipal body or anywhere else for that matter to prevent a 24-hour operation. All we have at this point is the spokesperson's dubious word.

This is a quarry that the proponent figures will produce around 2.5 million tonnes of crushed basalt a year. They won't be doing that working a sixteen-hour day. It wouldn't

even be easy to do it in a year that's chock full of 24-hour days. They will be doing it, as they say, 24/7/365. To do it, it has been calculated that the quantity of basalt the proponent is predicting annually would add up to one 50-tonne truckload every ten minutes! That's working all day, every day of the year. (And that's a whole lot 50-tonne trucks on the move—or maybe just a few that move at something like Mach 2.)

Imagine living anywhere near this quarry, living with the constant cacophony of 50-tonne trucks, shovels, drills, pneumatic hammers, enormous stone-crunching crushers, conveyers and such. Imagine the lovely dusty glow from it from dusk until dawn. Never letting up. Day in. Day out. What this quarry promises to do is no less than turn a beautiful and sleepy little Nova Scotia fishing community into a not-so-beautiful and sleepless little former Nova Scotia fishing community.

Just imagine trying to sell your home in such a community in order to maybe move to some other place where you might once again find a little peace. Little River is a place *known* for its peace. *Cherished* for its peace. A place where some families have lived in peace for many generations. A place that many have come to from away to find some of that same peace. How ironic.

Right now the roads and lanes of Little River and beyond are lined with "Stop the Quarry" signs. Maybe right next to each of those signs there should be another, one that simply says "PEACE."

Mark Dittrick, Interim Director

## The Mega-Quarry on Digby Neck

*Marilyn Stanton of Sandy Cove, Nova Scotia gave the following speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Canadians in Halifax on November 2, 2002.*

My reason for being here today is to tell you about the proposed mega-quarry for Digby Neck. But, before I outline the threat to our environment, I'd like to draw you a verbal picture of our community.

Digby Neck is a narrow peninsula, abutted on one side by the Bay of Fundy and on the other by St. Mary's Bay, all of which

ultimately connects with the Gulf of Maine. It is a beautiful pristine area, almost like a "land that time forgot." It is about 50 km in total length, with Long Island and Briar Island connected by short ferry rides. There is a peace and tranquility there, an oasis in the desert of concrete and commercial striving found elsewhere.

Digby Neck is all coasts with the ridge of the North Mountain serving as its backbone. The peninsula is slightly more than a kilometre wide at Sandy Cove and 4 kilometres at the 'head of the bay'. Little River is the average width, which is 2.5 kilometres wide.

The physical make-up of the peninsula & islands is basalt — the highly desirable commodity that has caused us to become a target for corporate America.

Two of the largest communities on The Neck are Sandy Cove and Little River, about 6 km. apart. Little River is a thriving fishing village and Sandy Cove tends more towards a retirement/summer-home area, giving it a different personality than its busy neighbour of Little River. It is reported that the highest absentee landownership in all of Nova Scotia is on The Neck.

Fishing communities are often considered to be lacking in education by their urban neighbours, and even by politicians, who feel these communities should be grateful for any crumbs of employment, even those destructive to their area. They totally misunderstand the highly successful industry that has provided for so many through the years and grants a different education that has led to very rewarding lifestyles, from both a cultural and financial viewpoint.

For instance, did our MLA ever read that Digby Neck was recognized by UNESCO as a paradigm of community economic development for North Atlantic communities - in its "MOST" or "Management of Social Transformation" programme?

Dr. Janet Eaton, member of the Sierra Club of Canada and internationally respected consultant in the field of global corporate economy said recently in a powerpoint presentation: "a synergy is brewing - the notion that Digby Neck is desperate for jobs especially ones that jeopardize this highly respected development process appears as a disconnect from the cultural, political and economic reality we see in this power point!"

Into this peaceful haven, Nova Stone Exporters Ltd. wishes to place a mega-quarry with a deep-water port to receive panamax-

sized vessels, bringing a cocktail of pathogens in their ballast water. The domestic water is extremely vulnerable to quarry operations. Fresh water is supplied by the aquifers in North Mountain. Blasting the basalt and creating a pit will drain the aquifer and lower the water table in the neighbouring lands. The water from washing the aggregate



The basalt under assault on Digby Neck Photo: Christine Callaghan

will eventually contaminate the North Mountain water supply. The peace would become legendary; the air polluted by dust, causing major problems to those with respiratory conditions and the particulate would pollute the plankton on the shore, which forms the base of the rich marine food chain known to attract the whales, for which the area has become famous.

Nova Stone appeared to think that they could slip into this area and set up an industrial site, unnoticed. After all, the group had the experience of 10 years ago to build upon and things had changed: they were 10 years more knowledgeable; the guidelines for pits and quarries had changed several times, and the new regulations facilitated development; and also, the Dept of Natural Resources of Nova Scotia was advertising on the internet: "take advantage" of Nova Scotia's mineral wealth. In Nova's view, we'd be just one more group of citizens, objecting to one more quarry, even though this quarry is significantly different in that it brings no royalties to Nova Scotia, as basalt is not classed as a mineral!

The changes provided an "entry path" into a mega-quarry by the fact that a 3.9-hectare (or 10-acre) quarry would enable them to escape an environmental assessment or public input, while getting "their foot in the door." And, of course, their plans included obvious stealth of operations, between

the government and themselves. We learned about the proposed 380-acre quarry from a conversation with Russ Patterson, president of Patterson Explorations in North Carolina: our own politicians and our own province would tell us nothing!

But, there were several things they overlooked: this time they picked an historically

identifiable location on the opposite side of Little River from the first attempt, a place where there was once a small but thriving village, and the site of Julia Sauer's award-winning children's story *Fog Magic*, a story published in 1943, based on the "cellar stones" that are still to be found there. And recently, we learned the area was

once referred to as "Indian Camp Hill," which has led to the First Nations' request for a land-use study. Oh yes, two other things they overlooked: there were more people who had retired in the area, bringing new skills and, even more important, a willingness to prioritize the fight over and above all else, and the involvement and expertise of the summer residents, who were not at all like the stereotype of "absentee landowners"!

And this time, by great good luck, we had Maude Barlow from the Council of Canadians, as early as June 11th, to expand our vision and our capability of understanding in a global perspective, what was really going on and the implications for the future. Believe it or not, her speech at a little fishing village may have changed the course of history for our area of western Nova Scotia!

One of the first things we had to do was work to identify what we wanted to save and convince others it was worth saving too. Fate took a bit of a hand here, as I had very recently become a member of the steering committee for a proposed discovery centre on Long Island. I had originally thought this was a separate issue but it isn't. It's an either/or situation. the centre would teach about and celebrate a unique way of life: geological wonders such as Long Island's Balancing Rock, formed by the columnar basalt; the wealth of bird watching opportunities on Brier Island, final land site for

migratory birds; the tides themselves which are the engines of remarkable biological productivity with their intricacies of the marine food web that sustains a feeding area for endangered North Atlantic right whales. There is a theatre and a classroom inside the proposed centre.

In six short months, we have built the foundation of our campaign: we have held seven public meetings; we presented a petition and held a press conference at government house; and we gave presentations at two municipal councils and the Digby town council. We participated in several parades and manned two weekly information booths – at the Annapolis Royal Market and the St. Bernard Market in the district of Clare. The moral support has been overwhelming, and we are continuously hearing of yet another group who wishes to join the growing list.

Mark Dittrick, the interim director of the Atlantic Canada Chapter of the Sierra Club of Canada, has walked by our side the entire time.

However, we are well aware that this is just the beginning, and that we are now approaching one of the most difficult phases of the battle, that of converting verbal support into financial and working reality!

We have learned the power of song and laughter – if it rhymes, it's acceptable – outrageous but not confrontational or inciting violence, but it identifies for all where your awareness level exists. Our Blue Tartan group opens and closes every public meeting; people are now writing for us (including the Wolfville Grannies, who wrote "On Top of North Mountain"), thus helping to broaden the resistance spanning the coast at our end of the province.

We have established the non-profit Partnership for the Sustainable Development of Digby Neck and Islands Society. This partnership represents a coalition of communities all along this coast of Digby Neck and is committed to stopping the quarry and promoting appropriate development.

Nova Stone Exporters Ltd., Patterson Exploration of North Carolina and Clayton Concrete of Lakewood, New Jersey have opened Pandora's Box: we on Digby Neck and Islands, and all our supporters, will never return to the complacent, non-involved and naive group we once were. After we defeat this quarry attempt, we pledge to focus our efforts on sustainable development, in a way that enhances our environment and our economy and celebrates our lifestyle – not lessens it in any fashion whatsoever!

# The Chapter Helps to Send a Seismic Message

*On January 23, a full-page ad in the Halifax Chronicle-Herald from a coalition of NGOs and community groups called on the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to continue the moratorium on oil and gas exploration off Cape Breton Island. Members of the Atlantic Canada Chapter helped in the preparation and placement of the ad the text of which follows.*

## Open Letter to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board

Thursday, January 23, 2003

Today, you will be making a precedent setting decision with long-lasting implications. You will be deciding whether or not to allow oil and gas exploration along the coast of Cape Breton Island. For the last three and a half years, fishermen, environmentalists, tourism operators, scientists, and First Nations representatives from the three Maritime Provinces have been working together to prevent the introduction of oil and gas development into the near-shore coastal waters along Cape Breton Island.

We have protested, negotiated, organized, pleaded. We have testified at countless public meetings and before a public review commission. And, most recently, we have participated in a long and difficult multi-stakeholder process that included the companies wanting to conduct seismic testing in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Sydney Bight.

### Why should you reject these permits?

- This is one of the most biologically productive marine areas in Canada. 20,000 fishermen and fish plant workers are employed in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence alone, with thousands more employed in the Sydney Bight fishery.
- These licenses start at the shore line. They would not be allowed in most jurisdictions in North America. Florida, for instance, does not allow any new oil and gas development within 100 miles of shore and the Bush Administration is now buying back old leases within this zone. Near shore developments are not allowed along the whole US Eastern seaboard, or off California, British Columbia, most of Europe and Alaska.
- The southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Sydney Bight are essentially one ecosystem. Every year more than two billion pounds of animal life migrates through these waters. This migration is larger than any known animal migration in terrestrial North America.
- Experts point out that 40% of all marine fish on Canada's East Coast are found in this area.
- The area is home to endangered species to Leatherback Turtles, Blue Whales and Right Whales. Seismic blasting can permanently harm the whales.
- The cod populations are in a desperate condition. The seismic testing could seriously impact these perilously threatened fish. So too could it impact precarious hake, and the decimated Bras d'Or herring. There is not a single scientific study anywhere in the world on the impacts of seismic on snow crab the most lucrative fishery in Cape Breton.
- These precious aspects of our environment are being threatened for little or no economic gain. Seismic testing will provide no permanent local jobs. Even if development should occur, there are no guarantees of economic benefit. In fact, experience so far in Nova Scotia suggests that local benefits will be few.
- We already have seen nearly seven million hectares of Nova Scotia's offshore under license. Enough is enough! The Department of Fisheries and Oceans testified in the Public Review that this area is more sensitive and more diverse than Georges Bank, the rich fishing grounds off South West Nova Scotia. Georges Bank is protected by a moratorium.

### These areas must be protected as well!

Please, in the interests of certainty for the worried communities of coastal Cape Breton and communities throughout the southern Gulf as well, and in the interests of certainty for the proponents, END THIS CONFLICT. Cancel the licenses and protect these important fisheries, stunning coastal vistas, and rich marine bio-diversity from the threat of oil and gas development.

Respectfully yours,

Maritime Fisherman's Union · Sierra Club of Canada · Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia · Po'tlo'tek Fish & Wildlife Association · World Wildlife Fund Canada · Ecology Action Centre · Friends of Nature · Environmental Defense · Area 18 Western Cape Breton Snow Crab Association · Area 19 Western Cape Breton Snow Crab Association · Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board · Council of Canadians · PEI Fisherman's Union · Gulf Nova Scotia Herring Federation · Environmental Coalition of PEI · Margaree Salmon Association · Conservation Council of New Brunswick · Margaree Environmental Association · Stewards of St. Ann's Harbour Association · Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group · Caretakers of the EnvironmentCanada · PEI Council of the Arts · Ocean Voice International · Whale Watch Captains Dennis Cox, Cyril Fraser, Fred Lawrence, Stanley McKinnon, Danny Robinson and Mark Timmons

For more information contact Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition, 1-888-810-4204, or check this website: [www.sierraclub.ca/national](http://www.sierraclub.ca/national)

# Kids Say the Greatest Things

*Last fall, students of a grade six class in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia wrote letters expressing their environmental concerns, with an emphasis on clearcutting in our forests, and submitted them to the Halifax Chronicle-Herald and the Annapolis Spectator. Both papers ran the letters and the local PC MLA, Frank Chipman, responded. The MLA said that he was not a big fan of clearcutting either, but he also asked the students if they knew that "growing forests actually give off more oxygen than old-growth forests." The class was quick to respond:*



Mark Dittrick meets with grade 6 students in Annapolis Royal. Photo: Copyright *The Spectator*

## ARRA students get the last word

Dear Editor:

We feel we are quite well informed about environmental issues and we are learning more about them so that we can be better informed.

We recently enjoyed a visit to our classroom from Mark Dittrick, Atlantic Canada president [sic] of the Sierra Club, and the editor of the local newspaper Bill Clarke. We discussed various environmental problems with them.

We know that clear cutting forests makes a lot of money, but the cost to Nova Scotia is too great. We feel that when forests are cut, that it is very important that they be replanted, and that more trees should be planted than the number that were harvested.

We also feel that planting just one type of tree is not good for the forest, or for the wildlife that lives there. We care about wild-

life and we want a place for animals and natural plants to live. A mixed forest provides that habitat.

We do not want any species to become extinct.

We question whether new forests give off more oxygen than older ones. It seems to us that a mixture of new and old growth might be better. Selective cutting would allow older growth to be harvested, and give room for young trees to grow.

We don't think that clear cutting is ever the only option available.

Having mixed forests instead of forest plantations is a better way to solve disease problems.

We realize that clear cutting is not the only problem that is causing global warming. We need to find other ways to produce power. In our area, tidal and wind power are being tried. We urge you to work on the windmill plan.

The Tobetic Wilderness area should be left alone. There are plants and animals there that need to be preserved, such as the only indigenous moose herd in Nova Scotia.

We feel the Kyoto Accord is very important. All countries need to work together to reduce pollution. Nova Scotia should not be opposed to helping the environment.

Yours truly,  
Mrs. Grant-Smith's grade 6 class.

# New Brunswickers File Suit over Environmental Consequences of Factory Farming

Following the visit of Elizabeth May in Sainte-Marie-de-Kent in July 2000, citizens and local members of Sierra Club of Canada have continued to network and persevere in their long struggle over environmental concerns from industrial hog operations.

In the last year, CAFO (Contained Animal feeding Operation) campaigns have mushroomed all across Canada. Quebec established a moratorium for 24 months on any new operations in about 165 municipalities.

Here in New Brunswick, Metz Farms 2 Ltd. operates the largest hog factory east of Manitoba. This CAFO, started in 1999, houses 10,000 hogs at a time, produces 35,000 market hogs per year, and features a 5.5 million-gallon lagoon. Twice or more yearly, the untreated hog waste from this lagoon is sprayed on area fields. For over three years, citizens have maintained the operation is too close to residents and should be closed.

In spite of serious local concerns regarding the social, economic, environmental, and health impacts on the community, government has simply responded by providing additional funding, in the amount of 1.5 million dollars, to help the operation install "new technologies."

The Metz Farm saga is now returning to court with about 45 citizens of Sainte-Marie-de-Kent filing a lawsuit in the Court of Queen's Bench. The plaintiffs contend that the operation and the spreading of manure are violating several provincial acts by causing pollution of the air, ground and water in the area surrounding Sainte-Marie-de-Kent. The action makes a claim of negligence, nuisance, and trespass on the basis that the defendant's operation causes water and air pollution which interferes with the resident's legitimate property rights. The residents are claiming against the defendants for a permanent injunction and compensation.

Jerry Cook, National CAFO Campaigner  
Bella Philip, NB

Become a Sierra Club of Canada Member /  
Renew Your Membership

As a Sierra Club of Canada member living in Atlantic Canada, you automatically become a member of the Atlantic Canada Chapter. If you are a student or youth, you will also automatically become a member of the Sierra Youth Coalition. All members will receive the national and chapter newsletters and periodic updates on chapter and national campaigns and events.

**Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club of Canada:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
Province \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Categories:**  Regular Individual: \$40 ·  Regular Joint: \$50  
 Supporting Individual: \$75 ·  Supporting Joint: \$100 ·  Contributing Individual: \$150 ·  
 Contributing Joint: \$175 ·  Life Individual: \$1000 ·  Life Joint: \$1250 ·  Youth/Student  
Individual: \$20 ·  Student/Youth Joint: \$30 ·  Senior Individual: \$20 ·  Senior Joint: \$30 ·  
 Limited Income Individual: \$20 ·  Limited Income Joint: \$30

**Payment Method:**  Cheque  VISA  MC

Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes, I wish to make a donation payable to the Sierra Club of Canada for campaign work.**  
(No tax receipt provided.)

**Yes, I would like to make a donation payable to Sierra Club of Canada Foundation for research and education work.** (Tax receipt for donations of \$10 or more. Registered charity #11914 9789 RR0001.)

Please send payments to Sierra Club of Canada, Atlantic Canada Chapter, Box 660, Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS for the  
Executive Committee of the Atlantic Canada  
Chapter, Sierra Club of Canada (ACCSCC)**

It is that time of year when we start to gather people who are interested in serving on the Executive Committee of the Chapter. (Executive Committee is another name for the board of the chapter.)

All members are hereby invited to make a nomination of any member, including yourself, to be a candidate in the upcoming election for 6 positions on the Executive Committee. Nominations will be used by the Nominations Committee to create a slate of at least eight people for election.

The term of office for two of these positions will be for one year; the rest for two years. Being an Executive Committee member means taking part in at least 6 meetings per year. These are usually about once per month (most by conference call) to organize and run the business and activities of the Chapter. It may also involve taking on a position as an officer and/or chair of a committee. And there will be continuous opportunities to be active in various campaigns.

March 21, 2003 is the deadline for receipt of names for candidates to be considered by the Nominations Committee.

Instead of being nominated through the process described above, candidates may also be added to the ballot through petition. The name of any Chapter member who is proposed in writing by at least 15 Chapter members prior to March 21, 2003, and who gives consent, shall also be included on the ballot. The ballot will be mailed out to members in the spring edition of the Sandpiper.

Please send nominations (preferably by email to conserve paper) to: ACCSCC Nominations Committee, c/o Tony Reddin, 120 St. Catherine's Road, Bonshaw, PEI C0A 1C0, mailto: marionc@isn.net, phone: 902-675-4093.  
Or to: Amelia.clarke@mail.mcgill.ca.



Sierra Club of Canada  
Atlantic Canada Chapter  
P.O. Box 660  
Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia B0S 1A0

Postage Here