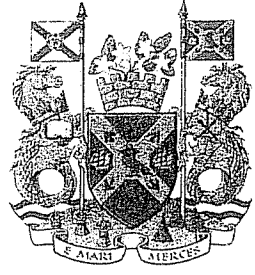


**Halifax
Regional
Municipality**



Peter Kelly
Mayor

1841 Argyle Street
PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3J 3A5

Tel: (902) 490-4010
Toll free: 1-800-835-6428

Fax: (902) 490-4012
Email: kellyp@halifax.ca
Website: www.halifax.ca

January 5, 2010

Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander
TIANS President
1099 Marginal Road, Suite 201
Halifax, NS B3H 4P7

HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY
JAN 15 2010
SG ✓
MUNICIPAL CLERK

Dear Ms. Grant Fiander:

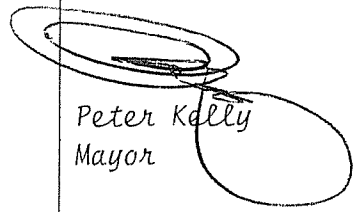
Thank you for your correspondence of December 15, 2009, regarding concerns over the potential development of lands in the Birch Cove/Susie Lakes area. This matter stems from a request from property owners in the area, as well as two other suburban locations of HRM, to initiate secondary planning processes for their respective lands. The requests are currently being evaluated by HRM staff and the Regional Plan Advisory Committee. Ultimately, Halifax Regional Council will determine whether or not to approve the requests to proceed with secondary planning exercises.

For your review, I refer you to a staff report that has been prepared, titled "Project 01341 - Cost of Servicing Study and Requests to Initiate Secondary Planning Strategies". This report can be found on the HRM Website (Quicklink to Regional Planning - Reports, Studies and Guidelines). I am also attaching a Question and Answer document prepared in response to similar concerns raised by individuals and public interest groups on this matter.

Should you have questions or wish to discuss this matter, please contact Paul Morgan, Planner, Regional and Community Planning at 490-4482 or E-mail: morgnp@halifax.ca.

Again, I thank you for your interest in this matter; it is appreciated.

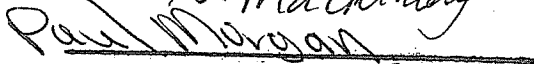
Respectfully, I remain


Peter Kelly
Mayor

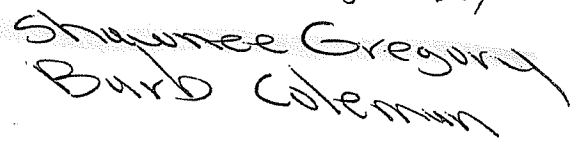
/km
cc. HRM Regional Councillors
Paul Dunphy
Austin French
The Honourable John MacDonell
The Honourable Percy Paris

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: M. Anstey, M. Labrecque
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, J. Church,
Solicitor, S. Mackinnon


Paul Morgan

DATE Jan 15, 2010


Shyanee Gregory
Barb Coleman

December 15, 2009

Mayor Peter Kelly
Halifax Regional Municipality
Office of the Mayor
1841 Argyle Street, P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3A5

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72 39910
DEC 16 2009
MAYOR



1099 Marginal Road, Suite 201
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4P7
Tel. 902.423.4480
800.948.4267
Fax. 902.422.0184

Dear Mayor Kelly:

We are writing to express our concern about the impact of potential development of land adjacent to the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes designated Wilderness Area. The addition of this Wilderness Area to the Protected Areas Network by the provincial government earlier this year was a significant milestone.

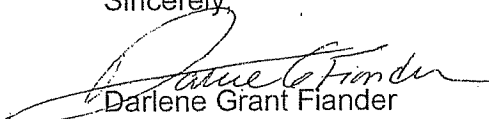
According to the 2006 HRM Municipal Planning Strategy document, the area HRM is currently considering for development was specifically identified three years ago as land HRM should obtain and develop into a regional park. The lack of progress in securing any land related to this site is discouraging and calls into question HRM's commitment to its own policies and parkland protection measures.

Recent media articles regarding this issue have outlined the importance of a holistic approach to land protection. From a recreational and tourism perspective, the area has significant value and is deserving of protection by HRM.

TIANS urges HRM to consider alternative methods of acquisition, as suggested in the HRM 2006 Planning Strategy. These range from provincial and municipal partnerships, land trades and conservation easements.

In closing, we urge HRM to take action and accelerate efforts in acquiring this land. The value of having a wilderness area so close to our urban centre holds tremendous recreational and tourism potential and is a significant asset for residents and visitors alike.

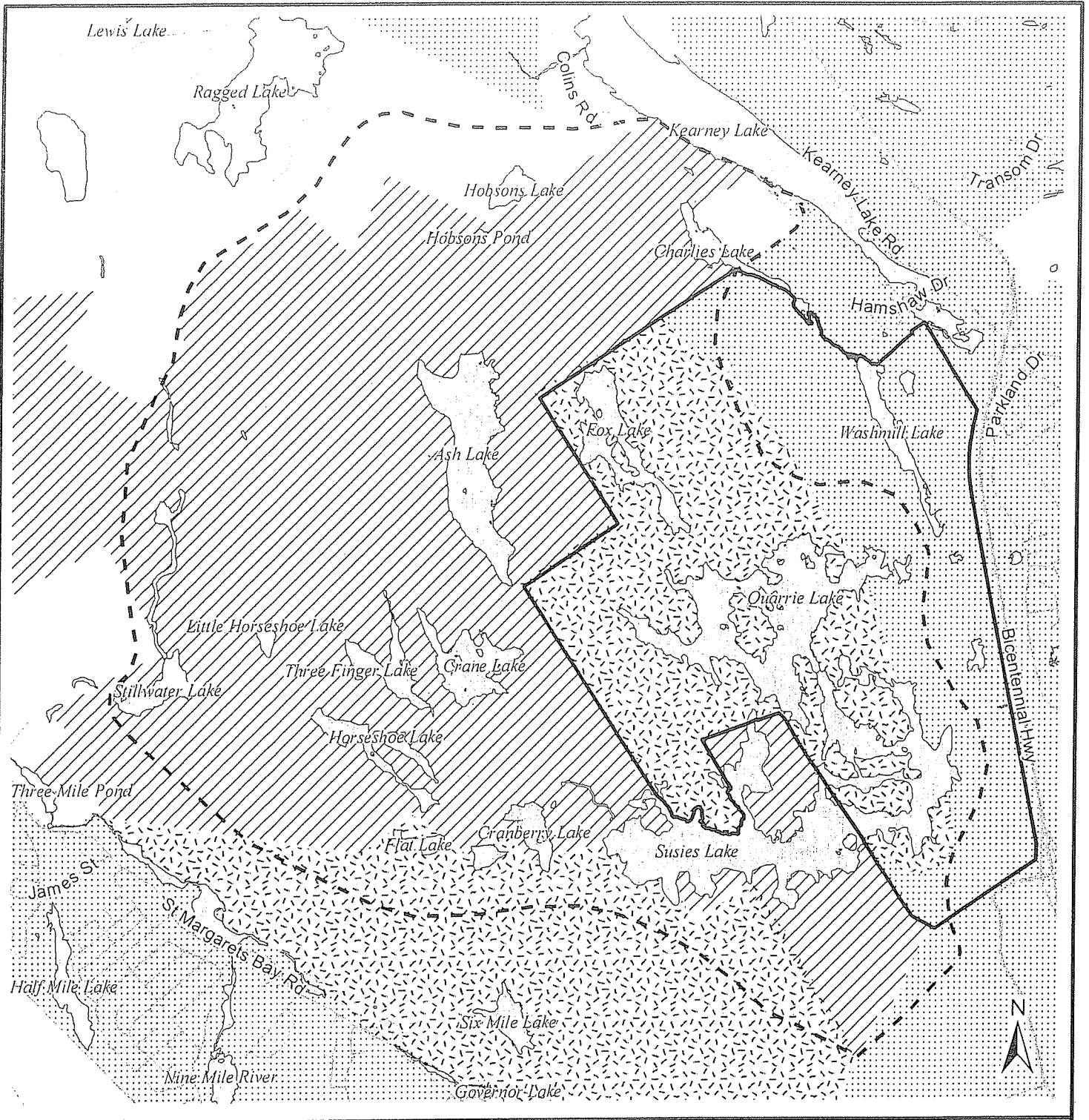
Sincerely,


Darlene Grant Flander
TIANS President






cc: HRM Regional Councillors
The Honourable John MacDonell, Department of Natural Resources
The Honourable Percy Paris, Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage
TIANS Board

www.tians.org



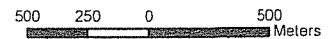


Highway 102 West Corridor Lands Adjacent to Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Park

-  Privately Owned Lands (Birchdale Projects Inc.)
-  Conceptual Park Boundary Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes (Map 13, Regional Plan)
-  Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area (Provincial Crown Lands)
-  Urban Reserve Designation (Regional Plan)
-  Urban Settlement Designation (Regional Plan)

Halifax Mainland Plan Area

HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING SERVICES



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan

Birch Cove / Susie Lakes Area: Questions and Answers

In recent weeks, there has been much public interest and media coverage regarding Birch Cove/Susie Lakes lands, located west of Highway 102 in Halifax. In an effort to provide the public with timely and accurate information about current initiatives in this area, HRM staff has prepared the following questions and answers. Please feel free to share this information with others who may also be interested in the Birch Cove/Susie Lakes lands.

Please visit the Halifax Regional Municipality website at www.halifax.ca (Quicklink to Regional Planning - Reports, Studies and Guidelines) for more information.

1. Where are the Birch Cove / Susie Lakes?

The Birch Cove Lakes are on the west side of the Bicentennial Highway between Lacewood Drive and Kearney Lake Road. A series of lakes - the largest being Susie and Quarrie Lakes are within the upper watershed of lands which drains through Kearney Lake and Paper Mill Lake to Moirs Pond in the Bedford Basin (refer to attached map).

2. Is development being proposed for this area?

Birchdale Properties Inc., representing four property owners in this area (Annapolis Group Inc., Armco Capital Inc., Gateway Materials Inc., and Sisters of Charity), has submitted a request to the Municipality to initiate a Secondary Planning Process to allow for the future development of approximately 500 acres. The lands represented by Birchdale Properties are illustrated on the attached map.

3. What is a secondary planning process?

A Secondary Planning Process provides guidance for the future development of an area through the adoption of land use policies and regulations pertaining to such matters as environmental protection, land use allocations, municipal service provision and phasing of development and services. The process results in the preparation of a document containing land use policies and regulations called a Secondary Planning Strategy.

The process involves extensive public consultation and entails collaboration and negotiation among interested parties including land owners, municipal staff, neighbouring communities and various interest groups. For any development to proceed, a Secondary Planning Strategy must be adopted by Halifax Regional Council. A formal Public Hearing is required at Regional Council before a decision is made.

4. What are the current planning provisions for the Birchdale Properties lands?

Under the Regional Plan, approximately one-half of the Birchdale Properties lands are designated “Urban Settlement”. Within such areas, central wastewater and water distribution services are intended to be provided to facilitate an urban form of development over the next 25 years (2001 to 2026). The portions of the Birchdale Properties lands designated Urban Settlement are illustrated on the attached map.

An Urban Settlement Zone has been applied within this designation which restricts new development to single unit dwellings on a minimum lot size of 2 hectares (5 acres) provided that the lot has frontage on an existing road and an on-site disposal system can be provided. As there are no existing roads on these lands, no new development would be permitted until such time as a Secondary Planning Strategy is approved by Regional Council.

The Birchdale Properties lands situated within the Urban Settlement designation is one of six sites identified by the Regional Plan as potential areas for new urban growth within the next 25 years, subject to the completion and Council approval of a Secondary Planning Strategy (the Plan identifies this site as “Highway 102 West Corridor adjacent to Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Park”).

The remaining portion of the Birchdale Properties lands is designated and zoned “Urban Reserve” under the Regional Plan (refer to attached map). Within this area, central services (municipal wastewater and water distribution) may eventually be provided, and the primary intent of this designation is to retain sufficient lands to provide an adequate supply of serviceable land beyond the time horizon of the Regional Plan (2026). The Urban Reserve Zone does not allow any subdivision and restricts new development to one single unit dwelling per existing lot, serviced by a well and on-site wastewater disposal system.

5. Does the Municipality have to accept this request and what is it’s status?

The Municipality is not obligated to initiate Secondary Planning processes upon receipt of a request. This will be a decision of Regional Council, and criteria to guide Council’s decision are set out in the Regional Plan. While several policies are relevant in this regard, perhaps the most important is Policy S-3, which speaks to protecting the fiscal health of HRM and financial commitments associated with servicing new growth areas.

No decisions by Council have been made to date concerning the requests to initiate Secondary Planning processes. A staff report has been prepared in response to the Birchdale Properties request, as well as two other sites for which requests have been made to initiate secondary planning processes. This report has been tabled with the Municipality’s Regional Plan Advisory Committee. A copy of the report can be obtained at: <http://www.halifax.ca> (Quicklink to Regional Planning - Reports, Studies and Guidelines).

The recommendations of staff and the Committee will be forwarded to Regional Council for discussion and decision in early 2010.

6. Is a regional park proposed in this area and where is it in relation to the proposed development?

The Province has designated approximately 1,350 hectares (3,336 acres) of crown holdings to the west of the Birchdale Properties lands as a wilderness protection area. This area extends westward from the Birchdale Properties lands to Frasers Lake in Timberlea and includes lands to the north and south (refer to attached map).

It is worth noting that the Province did not designate any privately owned lands as wilderness protection, nor did it acquire any privately owned lands for the purpose of designating them as wilderness protection. It simply placed a wilderness protection designation on lands that it already owns.

Under the Regional Plan, a 2006 study prepared for HRM, NS Dept. of Natural Resources and NS Dept. of Transportation and Public Works titled "Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Assessment Study", proposed a geographic area for the park (Map 13 of the Regional Plan). The proposed boundary includes portions of publically-owned lands (provincial) of the (now) wilderness protection area as well as considerable privately-owned lands, including portions of the Birchdale Properties lands. The park boundary in relation to the Birchdale Properties lands is illustrated on the attached map.

Through the Regional Plan, publically-owned lands in the area of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes are zoned "Regional Park", as stated in Policy E-4. The privately-owned lands within the proposed boundary of the park are designated and zoned "Urban Reserve" or "Urban Settlement". The reason the privately-owned lands were not zoned "Regional Park" at the time of adoption of the Regional Plan was because, as mandated by provincial planning legislation, HRM would have been required to purchase the subject lands within a one-year timeframe.

7. How are privately-owned lands to be acquired for a regional park and who will decide what lands will become parkland and what will be developed?

The Regional Plan indicates that it is the intention, over time, to acquire the necessary private lands within the proposed park boundary (Map 13) for public use. A variety of acquisition methods can be utilized, including provincial and municipal partnerships, as financial resources permit, land trades and conservation easements. At the municipal level of government, Halifax Regional Council will determine what lands become parkland and those that may be developed.

8. If private lands are acquired for a regional park, what zoning will be applied?

The Regional Plan states that any lands acquired will be re-designated to “Open Space and Natural Resources” and re-zoned “Regional Park”.

9. When could development of these lands start?

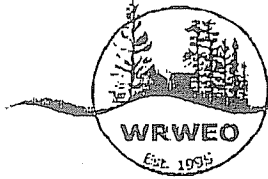
No development is imminent. Regional Council must first decide whether or not to initiate Secondary Planning processes at this time. Secondary Planning is typically a multi-year process and ultimately a planning document (Secondary Planning Strategy) will have to be brought to Regional Council for consideration. A Public Hearing must be held before a decision is made. If approved, detailed plans are then brought forward to the area Community Council for consideration, usually on a phase-by-phase basis. Again, a Public Hearing is usually required.

Further information regarding the planning process can be obtained by contacting Paul Morgan, Planner, Community & Regional Planning at tel: 490-4482 or E-mail: morganp@halifax.ca

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: *S. Mackinlay*
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *DeAO*
Solicitor *Austin French,*
Roger Wells, Paul,
Morgan

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
JAN 12 2010
[Signature]
MUNICIPAL CLERK



Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization
3650 Hammonds Plains Road • Unit 14 • Suite 300 • Upper Tantallon, NS • B3Z 4R5

Barb Coleman
Shawnee Gregory CC
January 12, 2010

January 7, 2010

To: Mayor Peter Kelly & Councilors,
Halifax Regional Municipality

RECEIVED
JAN 12 2010
MAYOR'S OFFICE

From: Richmond Campbell and David Patriquin,
Co-Chairs, Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization

Re: Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park.

Dear Mayor Kelly and Councilors,

WRWEO was very supportive of the proposal in the 2006 Regional Plan to develop a 1750 ha Regional Park in the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes area. We were especially pleased subsequently when the province designated the crown block of 1350 ha a Protected Area. This was entirely in keeping with the Regional Plan for a core wilderness area and a peripheral multiple use, recreational area.

We have been very concerned, however, that HRM has not followed through with its commitment to purchase (or address by land swaps or other means) the adjacent lands that were to be part of the Park. Further, we understand that a development proposal is making the rounds at the committee level.

This would have two major impacts. First the multiple use, recreational area for the public would not materialize. Second, development of these adjacent lands would seriously undermine the integrity of the core wilderness area, and the wilderness experience.

The eastern lakes, which include the major part of the water surface within the proposed Regional Park, would be directly impacted by development, with inevitable declines in water quality and increased risk of penetration by invasive species. As well, the views from the water that were envisaged as providing paddlers doing the circular 5 mile canoe route a sense of wilderness would no longer do so. That in turn detracts from the envisaged value of Regional Park as an important educational experience for HRM residents and visitors, and as an ecotourism destination.

Development of the adjacent lands with housing, instead of as a multiple use recreational area, would remove their function as a buffer between the core wilderness area and highways and settled areas. This would have direct impacts on the ecological integrity of the core wilderness areas through loss of habitat and increased edge effects.

Inevitably, without the multiple use, recreational area and with a residential development in its place, there would be much more use of the core wilderness area in ways not compatible with its ecological integrity, e.g., through illicit trails, garbage, noise... just general human disturbance.

Finally, we are concerned with the integrity of the developing complex of parks and conservation lands on the Chebucto Peninsula as a whole. We have been advocates of

protection for the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area (FBLWA) which has recently been declared a Candidate Wilderness Area. A key reason for seeking protection of this area is that the FBLWA occupies a large area in the centre of the peninsula and, once protected, it will be a relatively small - but critical - step to construct conservation corridors connecting the different blocks of protected land on the Chebucto Peninsula. In this regard it is important to follow through on the recommendations in section 5.4.3 of the Blue Mountain/Birch Cove Assessment Study:

5.4.3 Natural Corridor

The Crown and private lands lying to the south and west of the generalized park area form an important natural corridor, providing connectivity to the more extensive Crown and Bowater lands to the south and west, refer to Figure 21, Generalized Concept Plan. A critical link in this corridor is at Maple Lake/Frasers Lake where the proposed Highway 113 corridor crosses the lake system. The highway will be located on one of the few remaining "necks" of land available for species movement. The Piercey Investors subdivision development on their lands to the west of the lakes may present a significant complication for this initiative. HRM should work with landowners, TPW, and DNR to ensure the preservation of adequate connectivity in this area, consistent with the Open Space Functional Plan proposed in the draft Regional Plan.

Such corridors greatly increase the long term species carrying capacity of all of the connected blocks of protected land (compared to maintaining them as completely isolated patches).

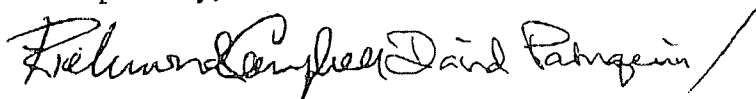
Indeed, with the now strong commitment of the Nova Scotia government to designate the FBLWA a protected area, we have the potential to make the Chebucto Peninsula a truly significant conservation area. On the other hand, If we start to backtrack on commitments such as those entailed for the BMBCL Regional Park, then we are eclipsing this wonderful possibility just as it about to be realized.

Some argue that "we already have enough parks and protected lands in HRM", but that ignores the significance of the collective whole for real conservation, as a part of our regional heritage and as a part of the vision of who we are and our values. We have a lot of parks and conservation areas in HRM because a majority people want them and understand their value for conservation and our own well-being.

We appreciate the potential financial "burden" (we would prefer to call it an investment) that might be entailed by the purchase of the private lands in question. We urge HRM to work with the provincial government, which strongly supported the concept of the BMBCL Park, to find ways to finance such purchases and/or come up with alternative options such as swapping of other crown lands for the private lands.

We very much appreciate your consideration of these comments

Respectfully,



Richmond Campbell & David Patriquin
Co-chairs, Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization

cc: WRWEO membership, CPAWS-NS