



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Information Item No.2**  
**Halifax and West Community Council**  
**April 21, 2015**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Halifax and West Community Council  
Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:** Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

**DATE:** February 23, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Western Common Advisory Committee

---

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

July 22, 2013 motion of Halifax and West Community Council:  
MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Adams that Halifax & West Community Council defer consideration of the establishment of a Western Common Regional Park Advisory Committee until staff has met with the Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust and the Five Bridge Lake Wilderness Area Stewardship Coalition. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

At the April 22, 2013, Halifax and West Community Council requested that staff provide a written update on the implementation of a Western Common Committee for the purpose of advising Council on guiding, monitoring, and reporting on the phased development of the Western Common Master Plan.

October 25, 2011 motion of Halifax Regional Council:  
MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Walker that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to advise on the merit of the implementation of an advisory committee for the Western Common Wilderness Park. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

***HRM Charter - Citizen advisory committees - 23***

The Council may establish, by policy, citizen advisory committees which shall advise the Council, as directed by the Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

This report is supplemental to the Halifax and West Community Council Staff Recommendation Report provided at the July 22, 2013 meeting and which was deferred pending this report (see Attachment 1 – Deferred Report).

The Western Common Master Plan was passed by Regional Council in 2010. It provides guidance for the Western Common lands related its functions of wilderness recreation, connectivity and preservation of ecological systems, hosting of the Regional Landfill component of HRM's waste management system and as a buffer for surrounding communities. The Ragged Lake Business Park also sits within the Western Common Master Plan area.

## **DISCUSSION**

At the request of Halifax and West Community Council, staff met on several occasions with the Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust and the Five Bridge Lake Wilderness Area Stewardship Coalition. The aim was to determine if there was a formal advisory role which that group might play, on behalf of Council, in the implementation of the Western Common Master Plan.

In their own description, the Five Bridges Wilderness Trust (FBWT) is a volunteer non-profit organization "dedicated to conserve public lands in the area bounded by Highway 103 and 333 on the Chebucto Peninsula in its natural state for public use." It has been in existence since 2001. The Five Bridges Lake Wilderness Stewardship Coalition (FBLWSC) is a "group of groups" tasked to share information and coordinate work between volunteer environmental and wilderness groups working in and around the Five Bridges Lakes Wilderness Area (FBLWA). It also carries out research and projects pertaining to the FBLWA. The FBLWA is one of 44 areas of public land protected by the Province of Nova Scotia by the *Wilderness Protection Act*. The FBLWA borders the Western Common along the Nine Mile River and shares many ecological characteristics and systems.

During the discussions, it was determined that FBLWSC, rather than the Wilderness Heritage Trust, would have the most pertinent interests related to the Western Common. Further discussions involved only the Coalition.

The member organizations of the Coalition are:

- Beechville Timberlea Rails to Trails Association
- Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust
- Safety-Minded ATV Association
- St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
- Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization.

The Coalition's Charter can be found as Attachment 2 of this report.

The organization offers coordination and knowledge of matters pertaining to environmental and wilderness matters on the Chebucto Peninsula and especially the adjacent FBLWA. There are synergies with some of the work associated with implementing the Western Common and they can provide a valuable ecological perspective.

It is clear that the organization has much to offer in terms of experience, passion and commitment for the environment and they represent one of the several necessary stakeholder viewpoints for the Western Common and, therefore, the Municipality should recognize and engage the Coalition in future consultations around the Western Common, and look to them as a resource on environmental and wilderness matters pertaining to the Western Common. This would be accomplished through the Municipality's current practice of public consultation which includes focused discussions with

stakeholders, organizations and experts as well as the general public. No formal agreement is necessary to carry out this approach.

*Consideration of the Deferred Report*

With the information in this supplementary report, Community Council should consider the recommendations in the deferred July 22, 2013 report at this time. That report advised that an advisory committee was not necessary to guide the capital development of the Western Common. However, the report did advise that there will be future issues associated with the Western Common that Community and Regional Councils should be aware of, monitor and may wish to have additional citizen advice through an advisory committee, as they have the potential to impact the objectives of the Western Common. Three matters in particular were named: Greenbelting and Opens Space Priority Plan, Expansion of the Otter Lake Waste Resource Facility and Planning for the Ragged Lake Business Park and any associated transportation network changes.

The deferred report recommended that Halifax and West Community Council:

1. Continue to monitor issues with the potential to impact the Western Common Regional Park; and
2. Consider the need for the establishment of a Western Common Regional Park Advisory Committee when the Solid Waste Strategy and the Regional Plan Five-Year Review (RP+5) public consultation processes are complete.

To aid in that consideration staff offer the following update:

- Both the Regional Plan Review and Solid Waste Strategy Consultations are complete and have benefited from Council consideration and decision.
- Resulting from the Solid Waste Strategy consideration, Council has directed Solid Waste staff to confirm the viability of increased height for the solid waste cells. That work is underway. The Western Common Master Plan objectives will be used as one element to inform that assessment.
- As directed through Council's Regional Plan Review approvals, the Greenbelting and Public Opens Spaces Plan is underway and includes a robust consultation targeting the general public and stakeholder groups. The Western Common is seen as a key element in the Public Open Space system.
- Further to the Regional Plan and Business Parks Functional Plan, a technical examination of the feasibility for expansion of the Ragged Lake Business Park for light industrial use is underway. The study will examine the opportunities and constraints associated with the site in the context of servicing, transportation, general environmental characteristics, connectivity and cost. The Western Common Master Plan is part of that consideration. If the study results support expansion and, if directed by Council, further planning work will involve community consultation in addition to the required public hearings associated with any necessary Land Use By-law and the MPS changes.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Outlined in the staff report dated May 1, 2013.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The executive of the Five Bridges Lake Wilderness Stewardship Coalition met with staff to discuss their focus and how it might relate with the Western Common Master Plan.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Deferred Staff Report to *Halifax and West Community Council - Western Common Regional Park Committee*

Attachment 2 – Five Bridges Lake Wilderness Stewardship Coalition Charter

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Peter Bigelow, Manager Parks Planning, Parks and Recreation – 902-490-6047

---

## Attachment 1



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Halifax and West Community Council**  
**July 22, 2013**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Halifax and West Community Council

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Jane Fraser, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

**DATE:** May 1, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Western Common Regional Park Committee

### **ORIGIN**

April 22, 2013, Halifax and West Community Council, requested that staff provide a written update on the implementation of a Western Common Committee for the purpose of advising Council on guiding, monitoring, and reporting on the phased development of the Western Common Master Plan.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Section 23 of the HRM Charter states "Council may establish, by policy, citizen advisory Committees"

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax & West Community Council:

1. Continue to monitor issues with the potential to impact the Western Common Regional Park; and
2. Consider the need for the establishment of a Western Common Regional Park Advisory Committee when the Solid Waste Strategy and the Regional Plan Five-Year Review (RP+5) public consultation processes are complete.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Western Common:***

HRM's Western Common was the former Indian Lake water supply for Halifax prior to the commissioning of Pockwock. It contains eight lakes, twelve streams and considerable wetland and forest stands; it straddles two watersheds, the Nine Mile River and the Prospect River. It is also the home of the Regional Waste Management Facility at Otter Lake; sits adjacent to the Chebucto Peninsula Provincial Protected Area and the Ragged Lake Industrial Park; and is adjacent to the communities of Beechville/Lakeside/Timberlee, Goodwood and Hatchet Lake.

A master plan for the lands, creating the Western Common Regional Park, was completed and approved by Regional Council in 2010. The strategic purpose of the Western Common is to protect the environmental assets of the area, host and buffer the waste facility, as well as provide for wilderness recreation.

The current Phase I of the five phase 50-year master plan for the implementation of the park, is quite prescribed. It involves creation of the Nicoles Lake Day Park with trails emanating from the Prospect Road Recreation Centre to and around Nicoles Lake and connecting to the local schools. It is a relatively small component of the Regional Park but is immediately adjacent to residential areas. It will primarily serve the local communities as a district facility. The current budget amount for capital improvements to Nicoles Lake Day Park (Phase I of Western Common Master Plan) is \$50k annually from Project No. CPX01328 - New Parks and Playgrounds, subject to Regional Council's annual approval. No other funding sources, other than HRM, are anticipated for development of the Western Common Regional Park at this point.

### ***Other Related Issues:***

The Western Common Master Plan does identify three regional issues, which have potential to impact or require detailed integrated planning on the Western Common. These are:

- 1) Otter Lake Waste Resource Facility - The plan understands that there could be an extension of the Waste Resource Facility beyond the original 2023 closure date. The plan recognizes that both the Otter Lake Facility and the Western Common were born of each other with the idea that the two uses can co-exist, if properly managed, for overall regional purposes.
- 2) Greenbelting - The Western Common would play a role in any conceptual greenbelting plan currently being discussed as part of RP+5, but yet to be approved by Council.
- 3) Ragged Lake - In the next year, staff will begin looking at details around the future of the adjacent Ragged Lake Industrial Park. The Western Common Master Plan recognizes areas for commercial development but calls for a high level of integration to protect water courses, which are headwater and constitute key connections into the Western Common Park.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***General Role of Advisory Committees:***

When considering the creation of Advisory Committees it is important to understand that their role is to:

- provide recommendations on specific questions as requested by Council;
- provide expert advice and information to Council on specialized matters;
- facilitate public input for Council; and
- through managing implementation of projects assist in enhancing the quality of life of the community.

Advisory Committees do require support and attention from staff and Municipal Clerks office in order to be effective; therefore, resourcing implications are always a consideration. Committee support and associated cost will vary in accordance with their assigned role and issues. A Citizen Advisory Committee was involved with the development of the Western Common Master Plan. It was dissolved at the end of that process.

### ***Citizen Committee for Western Common Regional Park:***

At the current capital allocation level of \$50K yearly, subject to Council's annual approval, and the limited park development to date, there is no compelling reason to create a citizen steering committee to oversee or advise on the planned annual improvements. Instead, local public meetings could be held as needed to review plans and capital and operational issues as required.

Relating to the future planning and integration matters identified in the Master Plan and articulated in this report, Community Council, through Regional Council, could utilize an advisory committee to explore and advise on park related issues when they feel that focussed advice, beyond what can be achieved through other community consultation processes, is required. As these matters are of a regional nature, it should be Regional Council that creates the advisory committee, should it be required. However, this could be requested through a recommendation of Halifax and West Community Council to Regional Council. Council would have the choice of delegating the task to Halifax and West Community Council or Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee to deal with the specifics, in association with appropriate staff.

None of these issues are advanced enough presently that staff feel a citizens committee for the Western Common could presently coalesce around and occupy themselves with meaningful work. The discussions around the Regional Waste Resource Facility are the most advanced; however, the proposed Otter Lake Plan presently before Council does indicate a good deal of public consultation within its process. Community Council, Regional Council and staff should mark these upcoming issues; monitor them as they evolve; and if they wish focussed citizen input, specifically for the Western Common, may at that time request that Regional Council form an advisory committee. A clear terms-of-reference would be developed at that time, based on Council's specific direction.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Capital investments for the Western Common are laid out in the approved master plan. Facility investment is subject to Council's annual budget process, which seeks to allocate on a priority basis.

Operational costs of a committee would involve allocating staff resources with co-ordination responsibilities from Planning and Infrastructure (who are responsible for Open Space), legislative support from the Municipal Clerks Office and subject area staff as required from other business units. Incidental costs for advertising, meetings, public information meetings, and specialized analysis, would vary in accordance with the particular matter being examined. Currently, there are no additional operational budgets approved to create this support. Instead, support would likely be created by placing this matter as a high priority and delaying other work.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The 2010 Western Common Master Plan was created through a series of public consultations between 2008 and 2010, including detailed work with a citizen Western Common Master Plan Steering Committee.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action recognizes the importance of the Western Common in achieving water quality, wilderness, and Waste Management objectives of HRM. The recommendation does not infer that Council remains less vigilant in balancing these objectives through the Western Common.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

If Halifax and West Community Council feel that Regional Council would benefit from formation of an advisory committee for the Western Common presently, it could make the request through to Regional Council.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Map - Western Common Master Plan



A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Peter Bigelow, Manager, Public Lands Portfolio Management, Real Estate and Land Management

Original Signed

Report Approved by: Peter Stickings, Manger Real Estate and Land Management

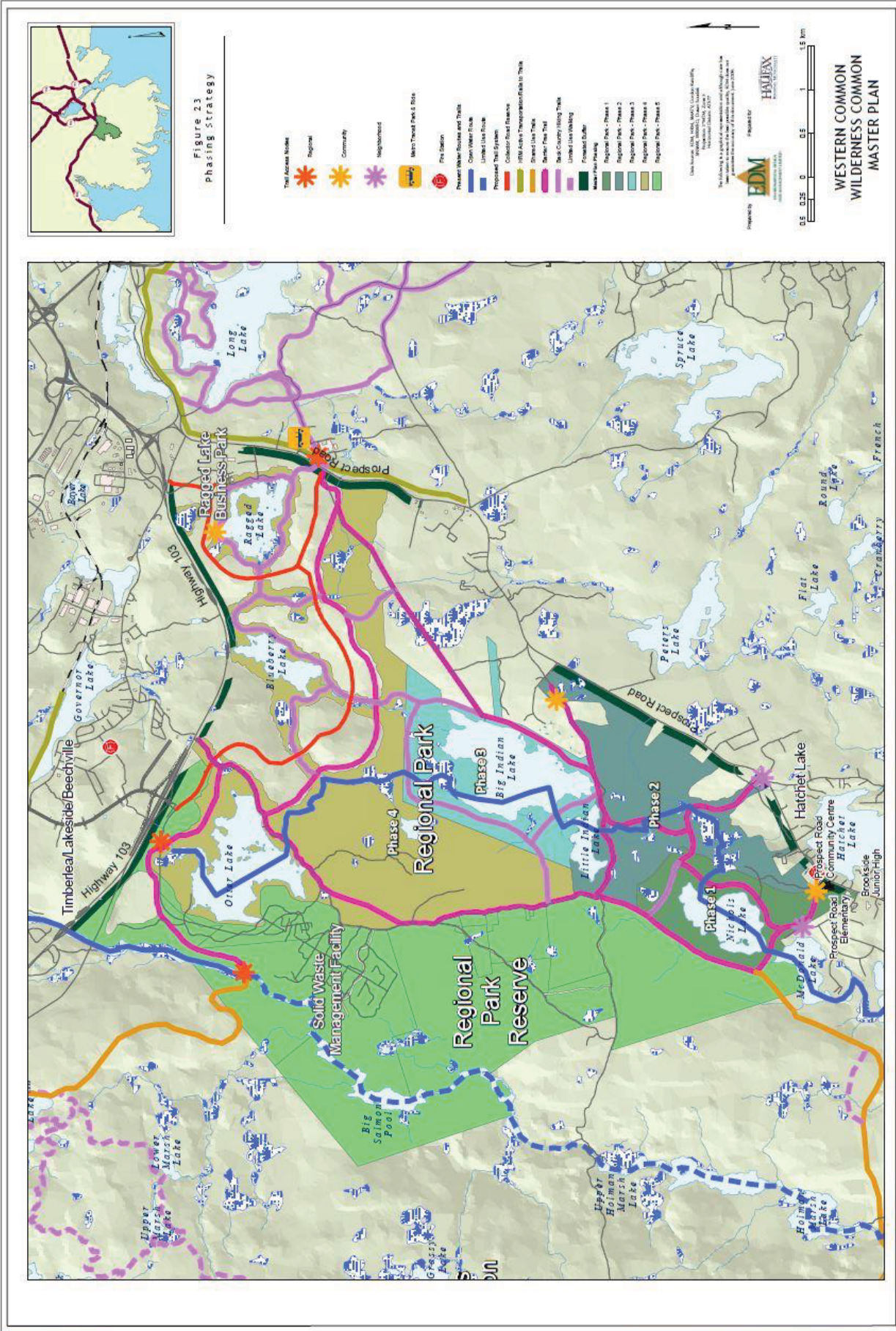
Financial Approval by:

Original Signed

Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 490-6308

---

# Attachment 1 Western Common Master Plan Map



# Attachment 2

## FBLWA STEWARDSHIP COALITION

### Promoting Community-Based Stewardship of the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area

## CHARTER

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These Guiding Principles are not meant to contradict any current laws, regulations, or rules that govern human activities within the Wilderness Area. Instead, they are meant to provide guidance in their understanding and application, leading to a healthy relationship between all involved, and to changes needed to protect the integrity of the ecosystem in the Area.

1. **We are part of Nature, not the owners of Her.** We acknowledge and respect the trees, the birds, the fish, and all our relations with whom we share the Wilderness Area. We are grateful for their important role in maintaining a balance in our natural world.
2. **We will assist in healing previous damages.** We will use the tools of science and technology to assist the Wilderness Area in healing former injuries and work to restore fish and wildlife to their former abundance. We will try to restore their habitats when we discover losses or degradations in them.
3. **We will consider the impact of our present actions on future generations.** We, the current generation, will think and live in a manner that will ensure that inhabitants seven generations into the future will continue to benefit from the Wilderness Area as we do.
4. **We will pay attention.** We will refrain from decisions and actions that would knowingly harm the Wilderness Area. We will work with authorities to ensure that any proposed alteration is thoroughly reviewed, and will only proceed if the ecosystem is to remain the same or benefit from the change.
5. **We will cause no net loss of habitat.** We will use the best practices available to ensure that, as we benefit from the resources in the Wilderness Area, we can ensure the restoration or creation of habitats to compensate for any damage we may cause to the land, the water, or native species.
6. **We will work together.** We shall be patient and work together in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation for the social, economic, and spiritual well being of our Wilderness Area's friends and neighbors.
7. **We are accountable.** We understand our responsibilities to the Wilderness Area, and to its inhabitants and users. Our actions will be transparent. We will measure our progress. We are prepared to be judged by our peers and by future generations for our actions.

René Lavoie

Adapted from *The Spirit of the Lake Speaks*  
Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI)

2011

## COALITION MEMBERSHIP

The five organizations that played a decisive role in protecting the Five Bridge Lakes area under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act will be the founding members of the Coalition (see below). Any other community group that formally subscribes to the **FBLWA Guiding Principles** and undertakes one of the **Roles of the Coalition** may, with the consent of the Coalition Council, become a member of the Coalition.

## ROLES OF THE COALITION

The Coalition will promote awareness, use, stewardship, and management of the FBLWA especially in matters pertaining to education, research, conservation, and recreation. More specifically, the Coalition will

- (a) Act as the eyes, ears, and hands of the community
- (b) Keep the community informed of the benefits of, threats to, and opportunities regarding the FBLWA (Education)
- (c) Assemble baseline data, track change, identify threats, and report findings (Research)
- (d) Enable, encourage, and facilitate access to the FBLWA; foster compliance with "Leave No Trace" principles (Recreation)
- (e) Identify and undertake remediation projects (Conservation)
- (f) Encourage compliance with the NS Wilderness Areas Protection Act
- (g) Recommend improvements to FBLWA boundaries
- (h) Promote HRM's Western Commons as a contiguous Park extension of the FBLWA
- (i) Foster cooperation between government and community agencies
- (j) Promote membership in the Coalition

## COALITION COUNCIL

The activities of the Coalition will be coordinated by a **FBLWA Stewardship Council**. The Council will

- (a) be comprised of one or two representatives of each member of the Coalition and two representatives of Nova Scotia Environment (*ex-officio*)
- (b) choose a Chair and a Secretary from among its members
- (c) meet at least once every three months
- (d) decide all matters by consensus
- (e) develop whatever terms of engagement it may require to fulfill its roles while respecting the principles of brevity and simplicity

## ROLES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council will

- (a) initiate projects
- (b) establish goals, objectives, and priorities
- (c) coordinate activities among Coalition members
- (d) identify sources of human and financial support for Coalition activities
- (e) serve as a channel of information among Coalition members & the public at large
- (f) serve as the link between the Coalition & Nova Scotia Environment (NSE)

## THE FIVE FOUNDING MEMBERS

- Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails Association (BLT R2T)
- Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust (FBWHT)
- Safety-Minded ATV Association
- St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA)
- Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO)