

**HALIFAX WATERSHED ADVISORY BOARD**

November 24, 2004

Luc Ouellet, Planner I  
Planning Applications – West End Mall  
Planning and Development Services  
PO Box 1749  
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

**Re: Case 00595: Amend Municipal Planning Strategies (MPSs) for Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margaret's Bay) and Planning District 4 (Prospect) to protect HRM owned lands surrounding Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes.**

**ORIGIN:**

Case 00595 was provided to the Halifax Watershed Advisory Board (Board) for the November meeting by HRM planner, Luc Ouellet. It was presented to the Board by HRM planner, Andrew Bone, at the November meeting and recommendations were formulated.

The Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust (Trust) has requested that HRM protect (through rezoning to Conservation) the HRM owned lands surrounding both the Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes. The Trust's objective is to restrict the land to wilderness protection and passive recreational (i.e., low impact activities) uses. This HRM land (PIDs 0065298 and 00650069) is currently deemed surplus.

This application was brought before the Board to allow for comments relating to management and alteration of the watersheds as per the Board's Terms of Reference.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Board would like to applaud the Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust for their work and commitment in protection of the lands directly tributary to the Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes. The support of HRM staff and the Western Region Community Council is also to be commended. The Board appreciates the opportunity to review this application.

Based on review of materials provided by HRM, the Board provides the following recommendations:

1. The Board recommends that the HRM lands surrounding Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes be protected and land use restricted to wilderness protection and passive recreational activities.
2. The Board agrees with the HRM staff recommendation to rezone the lands to a Conservation designation as the existing Resource designation does not protect the lands from development. It is acknowledged that the recommended changes require amendments to both Prospect and St. Margaret's Bay MPSs.
3. The Board acknowledges that both HRM and the Trust have ongoing discussions with the Province regarding future uses of the surrounding Crown land. It is the hope of the Board that, at a minimum, the Crown lands within the watershed area of Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes are rezoned to provide substantial protection to these watercourses.
4. The Board supports rezoning to allow only passive recreation. However, should motorized vehicles (i.e., ATVs) be permitted, they should be restricted to specifically approved trails that are located a suitable distance from environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Presentations at the public meeting indicated that there are camps located on lands surrounding Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes. If such camps exist, the Board recommends that HRM ensure there is no environmental degradation caused by such activities (e.g., septic arrangements).

**BACKGROUND:**

The lands, approximately 1400 acres, fall within two plan areas - St. Margaret's Bay and Prospect. The lands within Planning District 4 (Prospect) are zoned Resource (RE) and designated Resource under the Prospect MPS. The lands within Planning District 1 & 3 (St. Margaret's Bay) are zoned Mixed Resource 1 (MR-1), and designated Resource under the St. Margaret's Bay MPS. In both cases, the requested changes require future MPS amendments.

Existing zoning designations of the HRM land surrounding Moore's and Big Five Bridge lakes do not provide protection of the land from alterations, such as residential, commercial, industrial and/or resource extraction. According to HRM staff, the Prospect and St. Margaret's Bay MPSs require amendment to include a Conservation designation that restricts the lands to wilderness protection and passive recreation.

The lands surrounding the HRM owned parcels are predominantly Provincial property and are currently zoned Conservation (P-3) and MR-1 under the Prospect and St. Margaret's Bay Land Use By-laws, respectively. Discussions are ongoing with the Province to determine their intentions for future uses of the land and to determine if a respective change in HRM zoning is appropriate.

The Big Five Bridge and Moore's lakes are part of the larger Nine Mile River watershed, which is already stressed due to development along its shores and large volumes of effluent from the sewage treatment plant. Also given the substantive size and location of the land, it is a natural extension of the Western Common. In addition, HRM documentation has noted that there is a population of moose in the area. For these and other reasons, protection of these particular parcels is advocated by the Board.

Dr. Wayne Stobo, Chair  
Halifax Watershed Advisory Board

Copied to:     Members of HRM Western Region Community Council  
                  Mr. Oliver Maass, Regional Coordinator, Protected Areas Branch Nova  
                  Scotia Department of the Environment & Labour  
                  Mr. Harry T. Ashcroft, Supervisor, Land Administration, Nova Scotia  
                  Department of Natural Resources  
                  Tom Musial, Chair of the Five Bridge Wilderness Trust