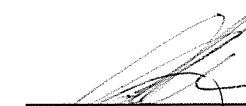
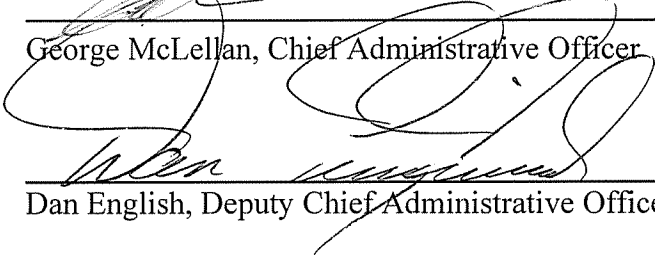


Halifax Regional Council
November 19, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer


Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 24, 2002

SUBJECT: Ketch Harbour Barrens and Backlands

ORIGIN

Regional Council, November 6, 2001, Item 12.5.3 - Councillor Adams - Ketch Harbour Barrens and Backlands

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that :

1. Council pass a resolution requesting the Nova Scotia Department of Environment to undertake a study into the feasibility of designating the proposed Herring Cove Backland Wilderness Areas, under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Herring Cove, Ketch Harbour Wilderness Area consists of two parcels of public land. The smaller parcel, about 500 hectares, is situated between the Herring Cove and Purcells Cove roads. The larger property, approximately 2,800 hectares, sits just west of the Herring Cove Road. The area is referred to as the "Chebucto Corridor" in the District 5 MPS.

Crown lands and other publicly owned property referred to as the "Chebucto Corridor" in the Chebucto (District 5) MPS comprise approximately 50% of the Plan Area (see attached map). This wilderness area is highly valued for its environmental, open space and aesthetic values. It provides a recreation resource and important wildlife habitat. The rural heritage of the area is reflected by the current conservation values of local residents and HRM Council concerning the Chebucto Corridor. These values are clearly expressed in the following excerpt from the District 5 MPS and the accompanying conservation policy statement "CON-4".

This extensive and largely undeveloped public land base is significant given its proximity to a major urban centre. While there is wilderness and recreational potential associated with these crown land areas, they are also important from an environmental perspective....Support is given for retaining these crown lands in the "Chebucto Corridor" as wilderness areas in the future. This conservation measure will assist with environmental protection and will help to retain wildlife habitats and unique ecological areas.

The Conservation Designation has been applied to the Plan Area's crown lands in order to establish policies for their conservation and future management. The policies of the Conservation Designation are considered foremost as land use controls to encourage environmental protection. However, the conservation designation also forms part of a development strategy which recognizes that retaining the natural landscape will be beneficial to future residents in the Plan Area. In this light, conservation and development objectives are viewed as being mutually compatible. However, as development takes place, new pressures will be place on these wilderness areas and additional conservation initiatives will be required. (Pg.84)

CON-4 It shall be the intention of Council to request that the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources develop a management plan for the future management of crown lands within the "Chebucto Corridor" of the Plan Area and within the Pennant Corridor to the west of the Plan Area. Council shall request that the management plan incorporate a public consultation procedure and determine environmental management objectives, public access, wilderness and recreation potential. (Pg. 84)

In the correspondence, dated July 22, 2001, from the Ketch Harbour Area Residents' Association, Barrens and Backlands Sub-Committee, it was requested that HRM support, in principle, the designation of the Proposed Herring Cove Backland Wilderness Areas as a Wilderness Area under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. And further that staff contact the Province to discuss joint

management of the site as a Wilderness Area by the Province, the Halifax Regional Municipality, and the residents and rate payer associations that border the site.

DISCUSSION

Based on ongoing open space research, municipal planning strategy, and discussion with the Ketch Harbour Area Residents' Association, Barrens and Backlands Sub-Committee, staff has accumulated significant information to support the efforts of the community to protect this open space asset.

Although it is being recommended that the Department of Environment consider the protection of these lands under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, it should be noted that these lands are currently under the management of the Department of Natural Resources. In which case, community and municipal objectives relating to the conservation of this area will depend upon a provincial government land and resource use planning process known as Integrated Resource Management (IRM) administered by the NS Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

At the highest level of planning DNR has created three designations of land use for Crown lands in Nova Scotia. They are designated as C-1 Resource, C-2 Mixed Use (recreation and resource) and C-3 Protected Areas. The Chebucto Corridor lands have been designated as C-2. IRM is both a planning and decision-making process intended to coordinate the sustainable development of the Province's natural resources. The IRM process has been designed using a multi-stakeholder model of decision-making. By adopting this process DNR has committed to bringing all resource users of Crown lands to the planning table to develop Long Range Management Plans (LRMP's) for designated areas of the Province. The first area to undergo this process is in Mulgrave however in recent staff meetings between HRM and DNR the idea of conducting a Chebucto Peninsula LRMP has been discussed.

In regards to the community's request to have municipal staff involved in the joint management of this site it should be noted that staff is currently working closely with DNR staff involved in the Open Space Plan and the Regional Plan. As well DNR staff have taken part in two public open space planning events sponsored by HRM Parks and Open Spaces. Both groups have recognized the mutual benefits of cooperative planning and the vital role that groups such as the Ketch Harbour Residents Association will have in the creation of a LRMP for the Chebucto Peninsula. In the meantime DNR staff has indicated that the Crown lands in the proposed Ketch Harbour-Herring Cove Wilderness Area will be considered as part of the overall LRMP process and that further research will take place in the future concerning the areas environmental significance.

Parks & Open Space's staff involvement in joint management plans with DNR or DOE will require further review of the business planning strategies. Currently the resources are not available to allow for staff to participate in the growing number of request of this type.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Recommendations in this report have no budget implication.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

No recommended alternative.

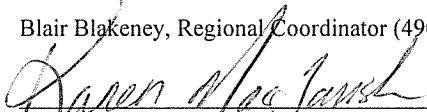
ATTACHMENTS

1. Chebucto Wilderness Corridor and Ketch Harbour Backlands

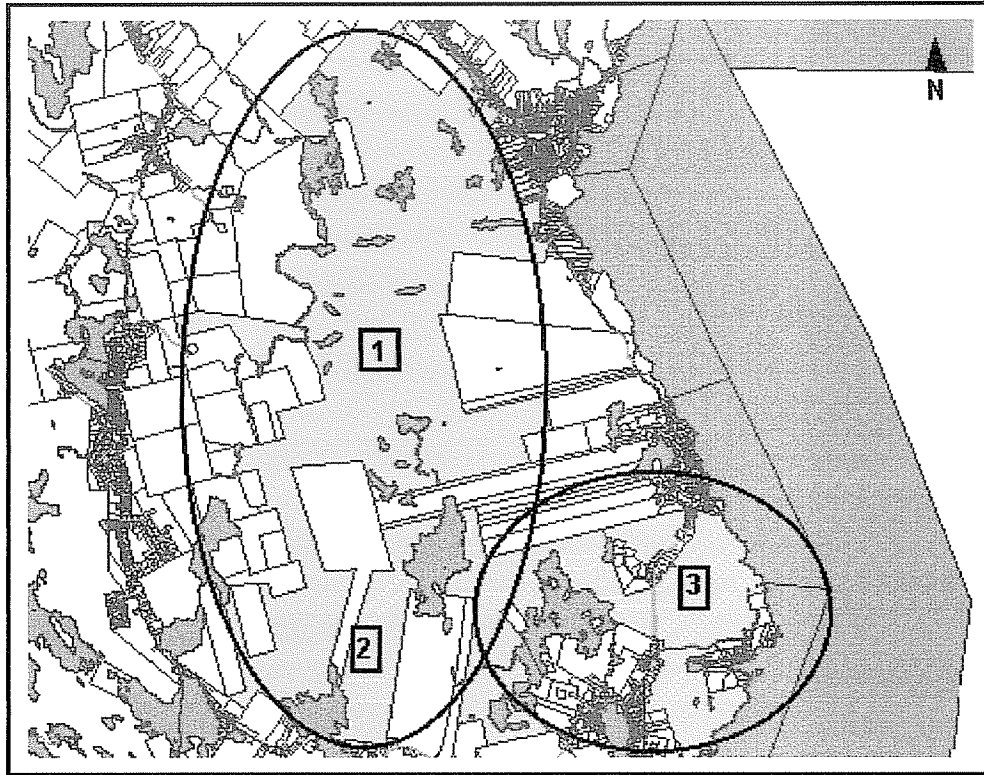
Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Blair Blakeney, Regional Coordinator (490-6789)]

Report Approved by:


Karen MacTavish, Director (490-4734)

Chebucto Wilderness Corridor and Ketch Harbour Backlands



Parcel # 1	PID 00649012	NS Ungranted Lands	2000 acres
Parcel # 2	PID 00455824	NS Ungranted Lands	480 acres
Parcel # 3	PID 00456558	NS Ungranted Lands	1800 acres