

DEBERT SOURCE WATER PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee was held at the Debert Lodge on June 9, 2026, at 3:30pm.

Present:	Councillor Marie Benoit Peter Dellewell – Rural Roots Engineering and Design Mitch Millard, Water Utility Manager Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works Reid Shepherd, Director of Community Development Chris Verge, Area Manager, Nova Scotia Public Works – <i>Arrived at 4:11</i> Mike Allen, NS Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
Regrets:	Mayor Christine Blair Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer Charlotte Sullivan, Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC) Jennifer Mantin, Economic Development Officer Representative, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq - <i>Vacant</i>
Approval of Agenda:	Quorum was not achieved to approve the agenda
Approval of Minutes:	Once Chris Verge arrived, Quorum was met. A motion was made by Peter Dellewell and seconded by Chris Verge. “That the Minutes from January 13, 2026, be approved as presented to the committee with the amendment of the spelling of Peter Dellewell’s name.” Carried unanimously.
Business Arising from the Minutes	None
Member, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq	The Committee Terms of Reference include representation from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, however' this position has remained vacant for some time. Efforts to secure a representative have been unsuccessful to date. Preliminary discussion indicated that attendance may be possible if compensation for time is provided. Councillor Marie Beniot will contact Bob Gloade (Millbrook First Nation) and Tim Bernard (Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq) to discuss potential representation. Michelle Boudreau will also reach out to Atlantic First Nations Water Authority for further discussions.
Terms of Reference	The updated approved Terms of Reference as approved by Council were circulated to the committee as an information item.
Current Watershed Activities	Jenn Mantin will update the committee on the land sales at the next meeting.

Source Water Protection Inspections

Water sampling on Staples Brook Road has been completed. Mitch will circulate the inspection reports to committee members in advance of the next committee meeting.

Watershed Signage

New watershed signs have been ordered. One sign has already been installed, and the remaining signs are expected to be in place by the end of the month. A total of four signs will be installed for Debert, located at Plains Road, Dakota Road, Staples Brook Road, and MacElmon Road.

Public Education Initiatives

Michelle contacted the local school regarding a potential presentation for students. Although discussion was held with the principal, a suitable date could not be arranged. Follow-up discussion will take place in September.

Watershed Newsletter

The committee reviewed the French River Watershed Newsletter and expressed interest in developing a similar newsletter for the Debert watershed area. Potential topics may include:

- Best management practices for fuel storage;
- Definition and explanation of groundwater and aquifer;
- Information on groundwater movement;
- Private septic field maintenance and any funding programs;
- Information on salvage yards;
- Well testing resources;
- Fire smart program information; and
- Water conservation practices during droughts conditions.

Planning Considerations

The committee discussed the potential designation of the Debert watershed as a Protected Water Area (PWA) under the Environment Act. Mike Allen advised that the designation process would require public engagement and would rely on the hazard and risk assessments contained within the Source Water Protection Plan.

The designation could apply to all or part of the watershed, and any watershed or wellfield may be considered, subject to provincial review and approval. Regulations developed through the designation would be enforced by the County. Existing regulations cannot simply be replicated within a PWA designation.

Pugwash was identified as an example of a groundwater supply that has been designated as a Protected Water Area. It was noted that PWA designations are generally activity-based rather than land-use based and this may regulate activities such as blasting or other practices that could result in ground fracturing.

The committee acknowledge that residents' primary concerns relate to industrial activities. As a first step, it was agreed that the Source Water Protection Plan should be updated. Mike will also provide a list of existing Protected Water Areas in the province that relate to groundwater supplies.

New Business:

Peter requested an update on the establishment of a Debert Water Utility Committee. Council has approved the creation of a new committee, and recruitment of new members will commence through a public advertisement coordinated by the CAO's office.

Next Meeting:

Scheduled for Sept 8, 2026, at 3:30pm.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned by Chris Verge.

Michelle Boudreau & Christa Wojcik
Recording Secretary