

FRENCH RIVER SOURCE WATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the French River Source Water Protection Committee was held at the Tatamagouche Fire Hall on November 16, 2022, at 10:00 am.

- Present:** Councillor Michael Gregory, Chair
Mayor Christine Blair
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart
Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
Mark LeFresne, Village Commission
- Absent/Regrets:** Kim Baldwin, Citizen Rep, Watershed
Greg Watson, Citizen Rep, Watershed
Michael Allen, Watershed Planner, Nova Scotia Environment
- Approval of Agenda:** *As quorum was not met, no motions were passed at the meeting and anything requiring a decision was deferred to the next meeting.*
- The Committee agreed to proceed with the agenda as presented.
- Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the meetings held on March 1, 2022 and August 24, 2022 will be approved at the next meeting.
- Business Arising:** None.
- Siltation:** Photos of siltation along Slade Road were circulated to the Committee. These photos were taken in Summer of 2022, following some maintenance work carried out by Nova Scotia Public Works (who own the road).
- Two issues were identified, the first being that lack of maintenance on the un-maintained section causing major washouts on the road, with sediment traveling into the watershed. This is also preventing access to properties as the road is not passible. The second issue was the siltation occurring from the maintenance activities, where gravel had been mounded along the edges of the road preventing runoff from entering the ditches, while the bridge had also been covered with gravel, leading to washouts into the watercourse below.
- The Committee previously had concerns about a similar matter following grading along Warwick Mountain Road. While a letter was forwarded to NS Public Works on February 11, 2022, expressing concerns regarding sedimentation caused by road maintenance activities, a response has yet to be received. Michael Allen, Watershed Planner with NS Environment and Climate Change, issued an email stating that his department does have existing Sediment and Erosion Control guidelines which could be applied to road maintenance projects.

The Committee agreed that a letter of concern should be forwarded to the MLA for the area. Michelle to draft a letter and circulate to Committee members for Approval. Where the Province supported our protected area designation, they should also be following our regulations on sediment control.

A copy of the September 2022 County newsletter article on sedimentation and erosion was also circulated to the Committee for information.

Forestry:

At the last meeting, Michael Allen suggested that we review the recently adopted watershed designation for Pugwash as they include forestry related stipulations. The forestry section was circulated with the meeting materials. Pugwash included the requirement for written approval for any forestry activities, adherence to the Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection Regulations (which apply to all lands) and also a forest management plan (which currently can only be enforced on Crown land in the absence of a special regulations).

In future meetings, the Committee should discuss approaches for education around forestry, as well as options for possibly modifying the existing French River designation to include tighter regulations with forestry activities.

Paul Smith noted that a County Wide plan must be completed by 2024, which could assist with watershed planning and controls. The process will include public engagement, as well as approval by the Planning Advisory Committee and Council. Watershed protection should be a key part of the plan and the option exists to include more stringent regulations for forestry activities as well as subdivision of land. The benefit of using the planning document to implement additional watershed controls is that they can be more easily amended in the future as compared to our designation document. This will be an important tool to address emerging issues. The new County Wide Plan will need to address five statements of provincial interest, one of which includes drinking water. This Committee will be asked to provide feedback during this planning process. Paul will provide updates on the planning process at future meetings.

The effects of Hurricane Fiona were discussed and would be beneficial to know the extent of the damage to the trees around the watershed and to update existing satellite imagery. The Committee could explore options through the Truro Flying Club or DNR for aerial photos; Michelle to investigate options. The potential for increased forest fires due to the blowdown of trees from Fiona was also discussed.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and Johnson Lake:

Both items were deferred to next meeting with the absence of Greg Watson.

Representation, North Shore River Restoration Group:

Councillor Gregory will reach out to Alex Feix who is a member of the North Shore River Restoration Group for a representative to replace

Doug Bastow on the Committee. Alex has a forestry background and would be beneficial to have him sit on the Committee.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, March 22, 2022, at 10am.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Michelle Boudreau,
Recording Secretary