



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

Item No. 15.3.1
Halifax Regional Council
September 9, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Deputy Mayor Tony Mancini, Chair, Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

DATE: August 6, 2025

SUBJECT: Community Based Stewardship Program for Wilderness Parks

ORIGIN

August 6, 2025 meeting of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, Item 10.3.2.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Office to prepare a staff report that assesses and makes recommendations on the development of a community-based stewardship program for wilderness parks, that includes the identification of possible staff resources for a coordinator and other financial implications including consultation with relevant community groups.

BACKGROUND

Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee received a presentation from the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization and St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association to consider community based wilderness stewardships and their necessity for environmental sustainability.

For further information refer to the attached presentation dated August 6, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee considered the presentation and approved a motion to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee did not provide alternatives.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Schedule 5 Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee Terms of Reference subsection 5(a):

Parks and Open Spaces

5. The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee shall:

- (a) encourage the appropriate policy structure to address amount, use and protection of parks, forests (urban and rural) and open spaces for the use and enjoyment of the residents of the municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Presentation dated August 6, 2025

Attachment 2 – Request to present dated May 6, 2025.

Report Prepared by: Dorothy Maponga, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.478.2408

Attachment 1

Item 10.3.2



ST. MARGARETS BAY
STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION



ST. MARGARETS BAY
STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

SINCE 2003, THE SMBSA HAS FOCUSED ON THE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF THE ST. MARGARET'S BAY WATERSHED.

- ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES
- NON-PROFIT, CHARITABLE STATUS
- SMB COMMUNITY VALUES ADVOCACY
- ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
- ISLANDS, WATERSHEDS, FORESTS AND THE BAY ITSELF!
- COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES
- SUSTAINABILITY
- BY-LAW REFORM



WOODENS RIVER WATERSHED ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION

- FORMED IN 1995
- ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACT REDUCTION FOCUSED
- CREATED THE BLUFF WILDERNESS HIKING TRAIL
- BLUFF TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM – 2017-PRESENT

Community-based Wilderness Stewardship?

Responsible and conscientious use of and recreation within public wilderness based on sustainability, conservation, community, monitoring, and observation.

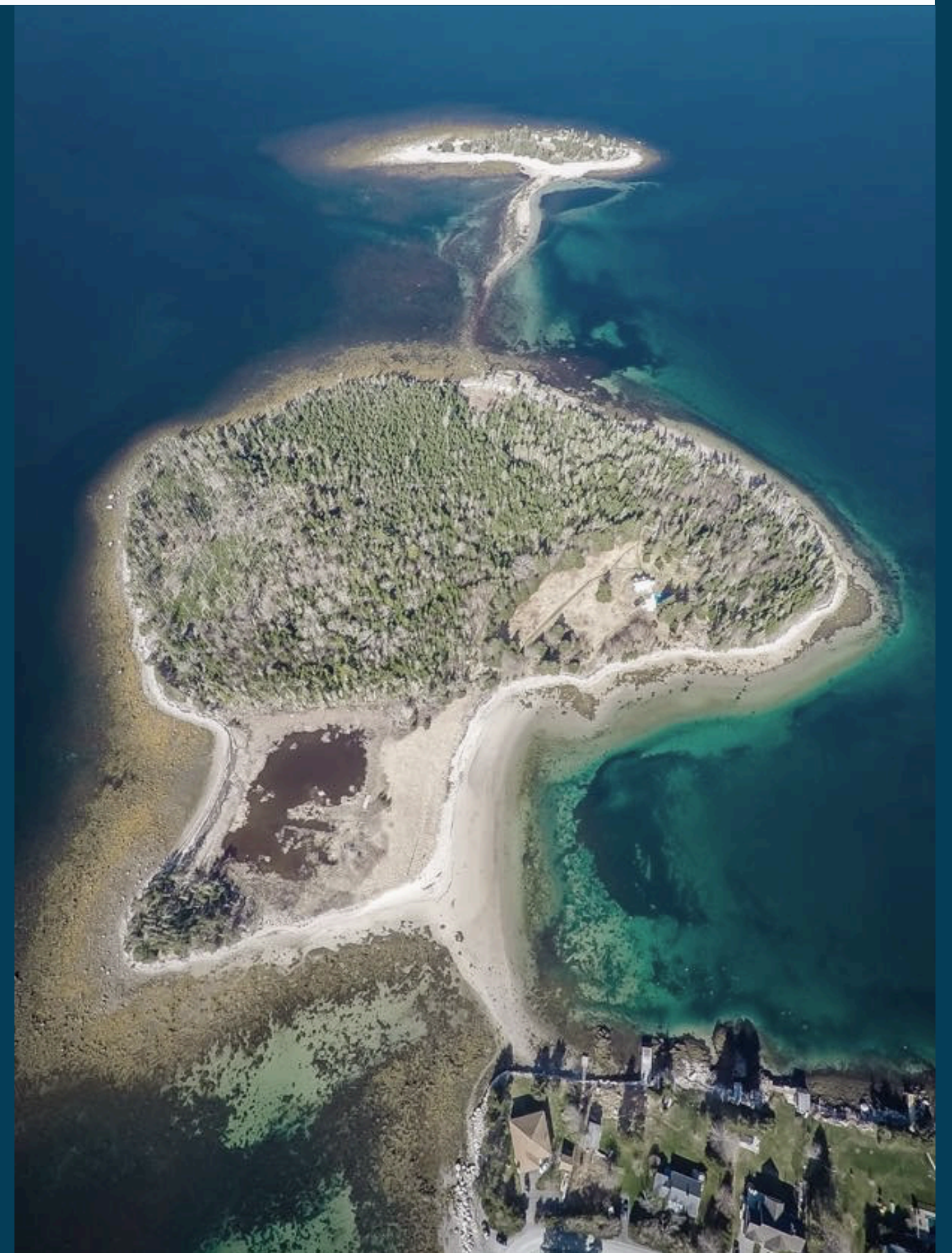
Somewhere between management and preservation

BLUFF TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



Some interesting stats:

- Over 300 Trail and Island Stewards trained
- Reduction in the rate of prohibited fires by over thirtyfold
- Cultural change in behaviours relating to fires, abuse, and ecological responsibility
- Over 21,000 lbs. of waste removed
- Over 25,000 hours of volunteer work coordinated
- Over \$500,000 generated annually in-kind



Why is CBWS necessary within the HGNP?

- High levels of public use
- Harmful/unsafe uses
 - fires
 - ecological degradation
 - rule/law infractions
- Invasive species management
- Enforcement of rules/laws is extremely difficult



The benefits of CBWS within the HGNP

- BMBCL, Sandy Lake, Shaw, and more:

- Reduced fire hazards
- Cultural change
- Increased volunteerism
- Increased management capacity
- Reduction in ecological degradation
- Multiplied value for return on investment
- Invasive species management



In short, CBWS is necessary to ensure the sustainability of HRMs wilderness spaces and their surrounding communities

Attachment 2

Item 10.3.2

From: [Ross Siegel, Simon](#)
To: [Maponga, Dorothy](#)
Cc: [Office, Clerks](#)
Subject: FW: ESSC presentation
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 8:38:48 AM

Hi Dorothy, just forwarding you a presentation request for ESSC.

Thanks,
Simon

From: Office, Clerks <clerks@halifax.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:49 AM
To: Ross Siegel, Simon <rosssis@halifax.ca>
Subject: FW: ESSC presentation

Logging as presentation request to ESSC.

Les

From: Richmond Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:40 AM
To: Office, Clerks <clerks@halifax.ca>
Cc: Mike Lancaster [REDACTED]; Karen McKendry
[REDACTED] Karen Gilmour [REDACTED]
Subject: [External Email] ESSC presentation

[This email has been received from an external person or system]

Richmond Campbell (Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization, WRWEO) and Mike Lancaster (St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, SMBSA) would like to make a 30 minutes presentation to ESSC on "Community Based Wilderness Stewardship".

Our proposal has the backing of 62 community groups that comprise Our HRM Alliance and is based the wilderness stewardship program led by Mike Lancaster that has been operating (with the approval of WRWEO and SMBSA) on The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail for the past eight years with enormous success. The proposal will provide data to document this success. For example, wilderness wildfires are the greatest threat to wilderness, and more than 99% of them are human caused. Community Based Wilderness Stewardship offers a data-based solution to this problem with the cost borne primarily by volunteers. Moreover, the proposal offers significant support to the Halifax Green Network Plan.

Richmond Campbell, [REDACTED]

