

**State of Nova Scotia's Coast
Consultation for Strategy Development
Open House Summary
Antigonish - May 18th, 2010**

Introduction and Overview

The Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture held an Open House in Antigonish on May 18th, 2010 to present the State of the Coast Report and receive public comments. This was the 6th in a series of 8 events across the province. Local residents attended the session to review information, talk with department staff, receive printed materials and complete a brief survey to share their views on the State of the Coast and development of the Strategy.

The organizing structure for the open house and for the State of the Coast Report is identification and description of issues under six headings:

- Coastal Development
- Working Waterfronts
- Public Coastal Access
- Sea Level Rise and Storm Events
- Coastal Water Quality
- Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats

A total of 35 surveys were received. This is a narrative summary of those responses. Also included is an overview of issue-specific comments left on butcher paper at each issue table, referred to as "table notes". A transcription of the written responses to survey questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 is provided, as well as the original table notes.

All of the survey forms were transcribed and quantitative results tabulated for each of the individual open houses. Results from the 8 open houses have been consolidated into a single report, however these and other specific session results are reported individually to support regional analysis and understanding.

The main messages from the Antigonish open house were:

- balanced approach that results in healthy people, communities, environment and economy
- clean water and shore, enforcement, parks and protected areas
- well regulated development with zoning and setbacks
- planning to address sea level rise and storm event risk
- adaptive planning at the municipal level
- support for community based initiatives and leadership

Survey Results

1. What is your connection to the coast?

Thirty-one respondents noted that they live on or near the coast, 28 mentioned recreation, and 12 indicated that their employment involved the coast in some way.

2. Prioritize six coastal issues and assess condition of the various aspects of the Nova Scotia Coast. (Note that a number of surveys were not completed correctly for this question.)

Following is the order of priority and average score on a scale of 1- 6 (1 = highest priority, 6 = lowest priority) for the six issues, and condition of the coast (with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent):

Issue	Priority	Condition
1. Coastal Ecosystems & Habitats	2.2	2.6
2. Coastal Water Quality	2.7	3.1
3. Coastal Development	3.3	2.9
4. Public Coastal Access	3.8	2.8
5. Sea Level Rise & Storm Events	4.2	2.6
6. Working Waterfronts	4.7	2.6

3. Based on your understanding of these issues, what would your vision for the coast be in 2020?

Frequently cited elements of a vision included: a balanced approach to coastal management that places priority on the health of people, communities, the environment and livelihoods; a clean and unpolluted coast that supports safe recreation and sustainable tourism; all stakeholders working together collaboratively; effective regulation and enforcement; water is clean and well protected; and, public access is improved and increased.

Potential for sea level rise and storm events is addressed through development of policy based on risk assessment and adaptive municipal planning. Development is restricted and erosion reduced. Development is better controlled by the use of setbacks, reduced density and the establishment of parks and protected areas.

There is increased public awareness, including the impacts of personal behaviours. For some the vision includes no oil exploration, no clear-cutting and no aquaculture.

4. In your area, who needs to be involved in addressing these issues?

Those who should be involved include: everyone, the public, local residents children and elderly; all stakeholders; all levels of government, especially municipal; NGOs with mention of EAC; developers; RDAs; business and industry, especially fishermen and farmers; recreation groups; community organizations; St. FX; specific areas including Mabu, Port Hood area and Milin Cove.

5. What are some of the things that can be done to improve how we manage these issues?

Suggestions included: holding more public sessions such as these open houses; stopping poor practices relating to sewage and forest harvesting; implementing effective controls for development; reducing a number of things, including CO2 emissions, environmental footprint, population and non-migrant Canada geese. It was suggested that enforcement be increased, and that we should be aware that what we do today has future impacts, and that all life is interconnected.

Several respondents noted that there could be leadership coming from the community, through citizen science and initiatives. Government should provide funding for community projects and leadership. Government needs to listen and act, and there should be a single department that provides oversight for all things related to the coast.

6. Additional Comments?

Respondents commented that:

- the province must take responsibility for zoning, by-laws and set backs
- it is time for action
- make special efforts to protect wetlands
- stop ATVs from using beaches and dunes
- hold more open house events, and continue to make the public aware of coastal issues
- this open house was well organized and staff were well informed

7. How did you become aware of the State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report?

This open house	12	Media	7
E-mail	13	Web site	6
Received a report	3	Received a letter	2

Other: AHWA (x3); EAC; word of mouth (x2); local river association; RDA (x3)

8. Which of the following versions of the State of Nova Scotia's Coast report are/will be most useful to you?

Summary 14; Fact Sheet 21; Full Technical Report 9.

9. How will use the State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report?

The report was considered to be valuable and important. A number of respondents noted that they will use the report for their own education and awareness, and will consider it to be a reference document. It will be used as the basis for discussion with others, and to help raise awareness. It was also noted that the report would help people make better decisions and lobby government for science-based change. The report should be distributed to all harbour authorities.

Table Note Summary

The need for public access was confirmed as a priority. There was strong alignment around the need to protect sensitive ecosystems and habitats, establishing zoning restrictions and educating the public.

Protection of natural ecosystems was seen as a way to ensure good water quality. There should be more rules for septic system effectiveness, and regular water testing. Consider placing signs to inform the public about places that are safe for swimming.

Working waterfronts need to have restrictions on business that sell fuel or have the potential to pollute. Development in general should be restricted by setback (at least 30 m.) and zoning should be established.

A lot more thinking and planning needs to be done regarding climate change adaptation. Sea level rise is a reality, and more action is needed from governments.

Survey on the State of Nova Scotia's Coast
Written answers to survey questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9

Antigonish

3. Based on your understanding of these issues, what would your vision for the coast be in 2020?

- Improved coastal access; Better management and surveillance of coastal development atrocities?; Claiming back our beaches by expropriating strips of land from owners to allow public access (1);
- An environmentally healthy and therefore sustainable coastline with setbacks for any development along the coast. Effluent from any source is either contained or treated so that coastal water quality and ocean water quality is protected. Absolutely no harvesting of any riparian zone/coastal zone area will be prohibited. More regulation, education and enforcement. Be fearless!! (2);
- Based on enforcement of new zoning laws most of the still available natural shoreline will remain. Unfortunately, business interests always seem to predominate (3);
- Collaborative working by all stakeholders to improve aspects of Nova Scotia's coast (4);
- 5 is blank;
- Controlled development with an abundance of protected areas, parks, and educational use (6);
- Greater regulation of coastal development based on a risk assessment of climate change, sea level rise, risks of erosion and risks to sensitive habitat (7);
- I feel we as Nova Scotia are surrounded by water but yet can't always access it. Land is being claimed, all areas should be accessed to promote tourism & traditional use. Individuals are claiming (8);
- Harmony in nature – clean water for everyone; Better public access to recreation on water, but education first! so people will respect and appreciate coastal water quality and ecosystems and habitats; Working waterfronts important, but always keeping in mind water quality (9);
- Need more public access, controlled development, so our water stays the same or better (10);
- 11 is blank;
- I would envision people having the courage to meet the challenges the future will bring with strength and integrity in ways that are within our regenerative abilities. To include the health of business environment depends on the health of people and our communities, which in turn depends on the health of our natural resources (12);
- Health habitats, good water quality, coordinated government jurisdictions fair and effective enforcement, limited development, public land scattered throughout/along the coast (13);

- Will complete on internet (14);
- I think the coast will be wiped out if these issues are not solved within the years to come (15);
- Sea levels will rise and if it is not solved by 2020 the coast will be gone. People will have to move from the coast (16);
- We need a coordinated provincial policy to restrict development in sensitive/unsuitable areas and to protect the waterside zones (17);
- Coastal Development would be done with criteria that favoured coastal ecosystems. There would be a coordinated vision among all levels of government and an enforcement of all regulations. There would be regular updates (monthly in the summer on the water quality for swimming and water recreation). Public access to harbours would be every 5-10 kilometers (18);
- It would be nice to see clean coast line areas and harbours where people can enjoy recreational activities knowing that it is safe for the users (19);
- A sustainable coastline – period. We know what sustainable development means. (NS Opportunities for Sustainable Property) (Natural Step, Forum for the Future (UK)) and many, many others. It's time for an integrated a pillar approach. All stakeholders (see Forum for the Futures – 5 Capitals Model) Vision is for shared collaboration on all key issues above. The coast is ours so we all need to invest time and energy to make it sustainable (20);
- 21 is blank:
- Unpolluted, accessible to all (22);
- We need to ensure that there will be access to beaches and the shore for all; Public access should be facilitated by creating easements on right of way passage over private land if there is no public access otherwise; Given that the sea is rising we should restructure coastal development of infrastructure to prevent future loss of same, i.e. restrict how closely one can build from the high water mark (23);
- I would like to see a clean, publicly accessible coast. I would like to see environmental and recreational based coastal tourism that is sustainable. I haven't really considered this question so I will have to reflect on it. Too important and complex to deal with in a few minutes (24);
- Oil rig and fish farm free. Crown land not be clear cut. More protected coastal lands (25);
- Reduce coastal erosion; Maintain and improve ecosystems and habitats; Reduce dense coastal development; Keep our water clean (26);
- Improved water quality – laws, policies limiting pollution; Rules governing coastal development – improved access; Government funding for working waterfronts; Protected ecosystems (27);
- 28 is blank;
- Increased awareness to coastal residents and tourists regarding their impact on the coastline; Improve facilities for commercial activities with increased awareness of their impact on the

environment; Select areas for public access allowing remote, raw coastline to remain untouched; Protect shoreline against Mother Nature's impact during surges and storms (29);

- Climate change adaptation planning (by Municipality) will lead to some control on coastal erosion but will fall short based on our ability to react now; Coastal development and working waterfronts will shift away from resource-based economy to tourism based as resource declines (30);

- Coastal water quality and sea levels should be in better shape. We need to improve the amount of erosion and pollution of our coasts. The beaches of Nova Scotia are beautiful, lets keep it that way (31);

- 32 is blank;

- Up by 20% [picture of box?] (33);

- [picture] (34);

- Coastal ecosystems with the purchase of land by conservation groups. More of those ecosystems will be protected. There will be less coastal access in the future as coastal areas are developed (35).

4. In your area, who needs to be involved in addressing these issues?

- Municipality – County of Antigonish, Town of Antigonish; Need to have a vision – no vision now and those who have a vision (Ecology Action Centre/AHWA) are not being listened to and if heard no action taken, e.g. MT Cameron Subdivision (1);

- Residents, people who live by the water and those who are educated about healthy coastlines. It is tremendously important that the government take responsibility for protecting the coast to ensure that it is not negatively impacted by development – either by individuals or corporations. The government needs to provide the support for those citizens who wish to protect the environment – the corporate money behind the influence to use/destroy the environment is [photocopy cut off] (2);

- Individual action groups, municipalities and, one would think, DOE. But DOE is not thought to be too important because it is lumped in with the Department of Labour (or was until recently) (3);

- All stakeholders (4);

- 5 is blank;

- Everyone really (6);

- I would prefer to see provincial legislation. The municipality has jurisdiction over land use, but is too easily captured by local developers interests (7);

- The people, speak and our delegates choose (8);

- Who can educate best? When people realize the need for quality, action will follow (Hope?) (9);
- Government departments, Fisheries & Environment and AHWSA. Educate public (10);
- 11 is blank;
- This may sound a bit idealistic but these are issues that affect everyone either directly or indirectly as I believe it is important for all to be involved – from the children in the school system to the elderly (12);
- NSDoE, NS Department of Fisheries, municipal governments & DFO – but also the citizens (13);
- Will complete on the Internet (14);
- The government, local people, volunteers, provincial government, anyone that can get involved (15);
- The government, volunteers and anyone that can help (16);
- Residents, developers, government departments and business with interests in coastal regions (17);
- Three levels of government, land owners, fishermen & farmers, university – St. FX (18);
- Municipal and provincial governments (19);
- Simply all key stakeholders. A greater emphasis in the initial next steps with those who have the most to gain/lose (people living on water, those making their living on the water/at the coast). Scarcity (loss) can be a big motivator for engagement; A stronger more interdependent engagement between four pillars of sustainability (ICSP Cultural/Economic/Environmental/Social). We're all in this together. Government must create a stronger bond between business community and the people (of Nova Scotia) (20);
- Fishermen & farmers, appropriate government departments & local organizations (21);
- Government, land owners, public (22);
- Those who will be directly impacted; anyone who wishes to have input (23);
- Everyone (24);
- MLA Jim Boudreau (25);
- Everyone who has an impact. People living on coasts and waterfronts – septic & effluent; Farmers – runoff; Municipalities – control effluent; Fishermen – sustainable catches; Foresters – soil erosion, etc. (26);
- Involve the local people who live and work along the coast. With expert advice they should have the most say in the future. Fishers, environmentalists, locals who live on the shoreline (27);

- The people of each area, Municipal & Provincial governments, Natural Resources, any environmental groups interested in coastal issues; Fishermen, boaters, cottagers, etc. (28);
- All levels of government with community, commercial users, recreational users, tourism departments (29);
- Dept of Fisheries and Oceans (Fed & Provincial), local RDAs, Province of Nova Scotia, Municipalities, Ecology Action Centre, local development groups, local residents, businesses, etc. (30);
- Mabou area, Port Hood area, etc. Nadine Hunt from Mabou is heavily involved with the ecosystems and dedicates her own time to improving the beaches and habitat of West Mabou Beach (31);
- 32 is blank;
- Milin Cove (33);
- 34 is blank;
- The provincial government needs to purchase access properties and beach properties (35).

5. What are some things that can be done to improve how we manage these issues?

- Listen and act. Monitor – we need watch dogs at the Provincial level; Expropriate sensitive areas either for protection or access or both where a [comments end] (1);
- Good science. Decision making based on the principles of caution when it comes to environmental impact; Regulate – be fearless in your setbacks!; Enforce – penalties for those who negatively impact (2);
- There needs to be a government department that has overall oversight. And money is required to hire more enforcement officers (3);
- 4 & 5 are blank;
- Facilitate grassroots coastal organizations at local and regional levels. Encourage and support citizen science, natural history clubs, and community marine resource centers (6);
- 7 is blank;
- We need to work for Mother Earth and be open and aware of saving our environments public input [note: ‘public input’ may be a separate comment?] (8);
- 9 is blank;
- Control development, especially run off from properties & erosion (10);
- 11 is blank;

- Keeping in mind the interconnectedness of all life and that our actions now set in motion what future generations will be working with, whether positive or negative (12);
- Curtail poor forestry practices that produce silt and poor water quality; Rethink our sewage treatment approach, eg: Antigonish and Pomquet harbours (13);
- Will complete on internet (14);
- Wildlife protection, wetland reserves (15);
- Wildlife protection, wetland reserves (16);
- Curtail development in sensitive areas. Help municipalities improve sewage treatment (17);
- Enforcement of regulations already in place; Regular visioning for the use of an area within a 10 year frame with wide consultation (18);
- Proper signage in areas and proper water quality testing (19);
- 1) Support local action groups (Antigonish Harbour Watershed Assoc.). Get groups like this created in rural communities. Resource them, help them with your expertise, and work on common goals; 2) Public awareness is essential; 3) Engage community leadership (formal/informal) this is the biggest issue of our time, the impact's huge – we need action now!! (20);
- 21 is blank;
- Education, involve schools (22);
- These public sessions are quite useful; Public education is essential and critical (23);
- 24 is blank;
- Learn by others mistakes (25);
- Everything, from reduction [of?] CO2 emissions, reduce our footprint on the planet. Family planning! There are too many homo sapiens (26);
- Others have already done much to protect coastlines – we are late – we need to get this done. This is a great start but we need to move! (27);
- Continue the coastal survey, deal with the rapidly impending disaster of overpopulation of non-migrant Canada geese (28);
- Involve all stakeholders; Encourage increased funding from Federal government; Encourage municipalities to help communities protect/ develop through grants; Increase penalties to sewage disposal/pollution in harbours at all levels (29);
- Focus on greater effort on climate change adaptation. Strategies involve many partners (funders,

planners – planning commissions, etc). Right now we have very little in terms of protection of economy and ecology related to Nova Scotia’s coasts (30);

- The public events such as this are helpful to inform the public. Mabou would appreciate a meeting such as this (31);

- 32 is blank;

- Net like a mile out to stop trash (33);

- 34 & 35 are blank.

6. Additional Comments?

- 1 is blank;

- There is much to say/discuss. I am unfortunately out of time. The provincial government needs to take responsibility for our healthy coastline and not ‘download’ this onto the municipal level. Support needed for bylaws/zoning/setbacks (2);

- It is good to see this present government consideration of wetlands!! (3);

- 4, 5, 6 & 7 are blank;

- The time is long due for action in relation to all of these areas being presented (8);

- 9, 10 & 11 are blank;

- Continue to do your best with the recognition that the future will bring unexpected change. This is an extremely important area for the future and many ways of the past can no longer continue if the next generations are to have a future (12);

- 13 is blank;

- Specific concerns with ATVs regularly riding on local dune system and public beach (14);

- 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 are blank;

- Your ‘Our Coast’ literature is sound. Distribute, distribute, etc. Talk to and engage with community NGOs. Come visit us, talk with us – we’d be pleased to help with key local/provincial strategies (20);

- 21, 22, 23 & 24 are blank;

- It would be great if you could hold more open houses throughout the province. Like Guysborough, Richmond, Inverness counties (25);

- We must make people aware of the issues. ???, action has an impact (26);

- 27, 28, 29 & 30 are blank;

- Very organized open house. Very informative staff (31);
- 32, 33, 34 & 35 are blank.

9. How will you use the State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report?

- Public education; Ask people to get involved with our AHWA Association (1);
- Distribute. Educate. Refer. Use to launch ideas and to help protect watersheds, coast and ocean. We all stand to benefit from environmentally sound decision-making (2);
- To see what the government expects to happen and how they are going to go about doing it (3);
- 4 & 5 are blank;
- As a reference (6);
- 7 is blank;
- I will ensure it be respected and shared (8);
- 9 is blank;
- At AHWSA meetings (10);
- 11 is blank;
- For educational purposes of myself and others (12);
- To lobby for science-based change, keeping social needs in mind (13);
- To gain a better understanding of the present state of NS coast and then to encourage others to do so as well (14);
- Make better decisions that will help the earth (15);
- Make better decisions to help wildlife (16);
- I want to increase my knowledge to become an effective voice in the discussion (17);
- Knowledge that helps me know my area; Information that will help us as landowners (18);
- 19 is blank;
- For distribution to key stakeholders locally (Antigonish). Also for distribution to people who live on water/coast here (20);
- Read to get a better understanding of the issues (21);

- 22 is blank;
- Self awareness; sharing of info with friends and family and colleagues (23);

- 24 & 25 are blank;
- As an educational tool to be shared with as many as I can share it with (26);
- Will become better informed. Use the information to engage in the process (27);

- 28 is blank;
- Personal use as recreational boater, coastline resident and distribute information to SCH Harbour Authorities for continued caution with facility improvements, water management and fishery management (29);
- Reference document. Useful tool in applying for climate change adaptation funding (30);
- To educate myself about the issues of our coasts (31);

- 32 is blank;
- Bad (33);
- Read it (34);

- Swimming, boating, hiking (35).

Antigonish Open House -Table Notes

(The number in parenthesis represents check marks that indicate agreement.)

Coastal Development

- Minimum 30M buffer - no new development
- Consider abandoning roads within 30m buffers on priority basis
- Need stringent zoning laws

Working Waterfronts

- Need to think about what business (like oil companies) should not be beside sensitive waterfront (2)
- Should oil companies be near or in any ocean or water frontage? (2)

Public Coastal Access

- Need public access
- Public access in relation to easements
- More public access is a priority

Sea Level Rise and Storm Events

- Not currently enough concentration on climate change adaptation, planning, programs and funding. (5)
- Sea level increase is not a possibility, it will be a reality as climate change ramps up in the next 10-15 years! More action is needed from all levels of government! (3)

Coastal Water Quality

- Protect natural ecosystems in order to keep water quality in a healthy sustainable way (3)
- When replacing water treatment plants make sure to test surrounding water before and after the plant is replaced.
- No signs to tell us where its is OK to swim (and where it is not safe) re: water quality, wharves and treatment plants
- Testing?
- Need regular testing and access to results
- More rules needed for private sewage systems

Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats

- Protect (7)
- Need to educate and continue to respect the complexities ..
- Zoning laws are needed!!