

**State of Nova Scotia's Coast  
Consultation for Strategy Development  
Open House Summary  
Truro - May 19th, 2010**

**Introduction and Overview**

The Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture held an Open House in Truro on May 19th, 2010 to present the State of the Coast Report and receive public comments. This was the 5th in a series of 8. Working Waterfronts events across the province. Local residents attended the session to review information, talk with department staff, receive printed materials and complete a brief survey share their views on the State of the Coast and development of the Coastal 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 23 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. It should be noted however that all of those who attended a specific event were not necessarily local residents.

**The main messages from the Truro Open House were:**

- Importance of environment, economy and society
- Need to ensure clean water
- Protection for at-risk ecosystem components and habitats
- Collaboration and integration among governments and stakeholders
- A lead government department that coordinates all coastal management
- Mi'kmaq people and communities must be involved

## Survey Results

### 1. What is your connection to the coast?

Eleven respondents noted that they live on or near the coast, 15 mentioned recreation, and 11 indicated that their employment involved the coast in some way. One individual mentioned service as a volunteer for the Coastal Communities Network.

### 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):

Issues in Order of Priority	Priority Score	Condition Score
1. Coastal Ecosystems & Habitats	2.1	2.5
2. Coastal Water Quality	3.3	2.8
3. Coastal Development	3.5	2.2
4. Public Coastal Access	3.7	2.7
4. Sea Level Rise & Storm Events	3.7	2.6
6. Working Waterfronts	4.8	2.4

Participants gave Coastal Habitat and Ecosystems was given the highest priority. The condition of all issues was rated between 2.2 and 2.8.

### 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: management via coastal development plan at the municipal level; responsible, controlled development within limits; quality of life before wealth generation; good public access; and financial investment by governments.

Sustainable development must be sought that recognizes the shared importance of environment, economy and society. Protection must be ensured for at risk ecosystem components and habitats; There must be collaboration between governments, communities and industry, but also a real lead department that takes overall responsibility and has the mandate.

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

All Nova Scotian's should have the opportunity to be involved. All levels of government must be involved, including specific departments that have direct mandates. Mi'kmaq people and communities must be involved. Also civil society organizations, volunteer groups and landowners must be involved., as well as resource industries and agriculture.

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

It was noted that action was critical, and it is time to turn policy and planning into action. There has been enough talk - lets get going. International and national documents relating to shorebirds, biodiversity, ESSIM, etc may be of use.

There needs to be continued priority given to public information and education, including at the school level. Communication with communities and individual should be improved.

Collaboration and integrated management are seen as being very important, as is maintaining ecological integrity. PON might benefit from being outside of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and governments should dedicate more funding for coastal management. Rules should be tougher and better enforced. Mitigation measures should be developed for sea level rise.

#### **6. Additional Comments?**

Governments must start to actually manage the coast, and not just manage the coastal file. Policies must be locally relevant and not just made in Halifax. Continue to involve local residents and stakeholders. There is much work to be done.

Give special consideration to habitats that are often neglected, such as salt marshes, wetlands and mud flats. Consider using the tax system to generate funds for coastal management, with initiatives such as higher taxes on second homes or development properties.

The process for developing a coastal strategy is effective and accessible. Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

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

This open house	8	Media	5
E-mail	9	Web site	5
Received a report	3	Received a letter	6
Other: word of mouth (2)			

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

Summary 13; Fact Sheet 10; Full Technical Report 7.

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

The report was considered to be valuable and important. A number of respondents noted that the report in its various forms will be useful for personal information and knowledge, as an aid to decision-making, and as a continuing resource. Others noted that it will be shared with others, including family, neighbours and colleagues in the work place.

Some respondents indicated that the report would inform decisions in the workplace that relate to the coast, for example, decisions regarding agricultural practices.

**Table Note Summary**

It was noted that communities need guidance on setbacks and sea level rise, and that municipalities should have coastal management plans to understand where the areas of highest risk are located.

Aquaculture should have been more of an integral part of the coastal strategy conversation. The vital importance of working waterfronts to local economies was noted, and concern was expressed regarding success of younger people into the commercial fishery.

Regarding development it was noted that economic ventures are important for the community, but that they must be undertaken with environment as a priority. It was noted that water quality must be monitored for pollutants that have come downstream in water courses.

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

**Truro**

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

- Coastal development would be controlled through municipal units with strong support from the Province (strong as in trained staff dedicated to such programs). With this would come the addressing of the other issues as noted above [in survey] (1);
- Extensive coastal development will continue and will probably be hard to stop – everyone wants to live on the water. Cities and towns will hopefully expand sewage treatment programs which will be good (2);
- A solid understanding and shared respect for our coasts by all Nova Scotians and a willingness of government and industry to first consider the quality of life and the natural environment as paramount to wealth creation (3);
- More protection of coastal ecosystems and habitat; Limited development along coast; Protection of salt marsh area; Development of set backs for mitigating coastlines (4);
- 5 unreadable photocopy;
- Increase public access from the current 11% of coastlines to 30% within 5 years; Have public stops every 20 kms on site to allow a space to appreciate the unique beauty and intrinsic value of ocean and land (6);
- A coast with explicit land use management: principally by municipalities through plans and by-laws; with enhanced participation of/role for coastal stewardship groups; backed by increased government research/mapping; with resources for municipal expertise & community capacity-building; without pervasive grandfathering of projects; with a real lead department (and maybe a Coasts Act) (7);
- That all levels of government, communities and industry are taking an active, coordinated approach to dealing with the issues (8);
- GIS based coastal development plan that allows for development in certain areas with certain conditions while protecting those areas that are sensitive (9);
- The NS coast would be a balance of understanding the habitat, economics and cultural value of all areas of our coast (10);
- I would like to [see] restoration of salt marshes and feeder rivers and streams, estuaries, etc. Development along all waterfront should be regulated to preserve ecosystem values. This would also help prevent property damage during storms and flooding. I would be happy to see working waterfronts where and when ecosystem values were taking priority (11);

- Hoping for much less uncontrolled condo, factory, resort developments on the coasts. More protection of nature/natural habitats, and more water water/garbage treatment (12);
- To limit pollution events/risk (13);
- Depends on what happens as a result of this survey! Obviously prevention and remediation of shoreline destruction is expansion – and maybe not necessary (property owners in danger should be responsible). But laws to corral development, water quality, ecosystems and public access need not cost much – so I hope there will be improvements by 2020! (14);
- Public ownership and access to coastal areas; Infrastructure in place to protect areas from storm surges; Rules around coastal development limiting construction on areas susceptible to surges, etc. (15);
- The coastline needs to be better protected, too much shoreline is being destroyed by storms and wave actions (16);
- Coastal ecosystems protected → people (economics); Rural coastal → important to balance → need to keep ecosystem integrity (for its own sake) plus livelihoods depend on it. Rural populations depend directly (fishing) & indirectly (tourism – attracting people) (17);
- Implementation of measures to mitigate effects of sea-level rise (18);
- Sound treatment prior to entering shore, if applicable; Enhanced appreciation by general public; Sound and consistent management of coastal area throughout the province (19);
- Erosion stabilized; Development under control (20);
- Open areas for public access is very important – but must improved working waterfronts → access to and offloading; Water quality will be paramount for fishing and coastal aquaculture – already at risk due to sea level rise) (21);
- As coastlines develop we need to carefully ascertain how development will affect ecosystems and habitats. Coastal policy should focus on protection of what we have as opposed to our want for more (22);
- I would like to see a well protected coastline that provides lots of habitat for wildlife. We need to ensure that any coastal development does not negatively impact our wildlife. I also think that we need to ensure lots of public access. Another issue that I'm concerned about is seal level rise and erosion and would like measures taken to ensure that too much erosion doesn't take place (23);

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

- Municipal government, lead by the Province in a much stronger way. Statements of Interest have proven to be ineffective. Municipalities need the Province to create and sustain this type of approach (1);
- 2 blank;
- All Nova Scotians, young and old, regardless of background, education or job. An interconnecting priority for this strategy should be the expanded and continued education for all Nova Scotians, and beyond formal schooling, to realize their place and their interconnectedness and interdependency with our natural coasts (3);
- Municipalities, Mi'kmaq of NS, developers, community members, university/colleges, NGOs, Province, etc. (4);
- Government – more legislation supported by financial contribution to supplement; More research.(5);
- Municipal, County, Provincial, Federal and citizens, civil society (6);
- Rural HRM presents a particular governance challenge. On the Eastern Shore, up to Porter's Lake (and soon Musquodoboit) the concern is with rapid growth along watercourses. Beyond (all the way to Moser River), the concern is for the continuing decline of working waterfronts and communities. To be relevant to them, the Coastal Strategy will have to be closely linked to the upcoming Rural Resources Strategy (7);
- All levels of government and key industries including resource industries – forestry, mining, etc. (8);
- Federal and provincial government, municipalities, NGOs (9);
- Government, researchers, non-profit organizations – e.g. Coastal Communities Coalition, CCN. We need all 3 levels to meet regularly so each understands how the other partner is affecting/solving the issues along our coast (10);
- In the Minas Basin many salt marshes have historically been destroyed in order to secure agricultural lands. I believe that many of these trends need to be renewed. This, I believe, is the responsibility of DFO, NSDNR, NS Department of Environment, Agriculture. Forestry practices need to be changed and rigorously enforced on public and private lands to protect riparian health and downstream coastal biodiversity. DFO should address ongoing acid rain-caused species loss (11);
- Federal, provincial and regional governments. Need more regulations/restrictions to control or discourage trashing the nature/coasts (12);
- Local volunteer groups; government (13);
- all those who are interested and have ideas. Not limited to property owners! (14);
- Land owners, government (15);

- All levels of government as well as the public action groups (16);
- All people as all are or will be affected. Municipal is closest form of government and most in contact with people but often lack the knowledge or resources. Provincial needs to work will all to develop policies that work for all, now and in future (17);
- Federal, Provincial government agencies, Municipalities, and those affected by shoreline erosion (18);
- General public awareness campaign; Municipal/Provincial/Federal levels of government; Farmers, industry members, Department of Health...Environment/Climate/etc. (19);
- Shoreline owners, Highways (DOTPW), DFO – Small craft harbours, engineers, contractors (20);
- DFO – Municipalities and industrial end users; Public access must be improved; Municipalities and planning (21);
- Community, municipality and Provincial & Federal governments (22);
- DNR; Town & County of Colchester; Is there a dyke commission or something similar? (23);

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

- Now that this report has been completed and major issues identified and discussed, let's get going. Put the staff in place for action and lead the Municipalities onward. The layperson (typically) will cooperate when they understand the reasons why rules and regulations are brought in, so provide the tools to do it (1);
- 2, 23 blank;
- Direct connections in policy and activities between this strategy and some international guiding documents and initiatives, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, Shorebird Initiatives, ESSIM, etc.; Signage and many points of access/look off to appreciate the natural scenery – not just the big areas; Improved communications with communities and individuals to learn their issues and concerns about local coastal areas (3);
- Development of setbacks; protected coastlines; identification of areas of importance and significance for habitat, ecosystems, recreation; sea level rise needs to be addressed for FN communities and how coastal communities/FN communities are going to address setbacks with limited land (4);
- Public education starting in schools; More research and development in the area (5);
- 1) Signage = Hamlets? should carry out the Provincial message. More than “Canada’s Ocean Playground”. NS coasts are our coasts – live, work, play, protect (6);
- Get the PON unit Out of DFA, and into the “new” Natural Resources; Follow RCCOM’s example, and get COASTAL into your unit name!; Get the Feds to the table to sign that Marine



MOU soon; Get past the UNSM Neanderthals to work with their progressive members; Get EAC/CCNS/etc. to stop spooking local politicians by insisting on heavy-handed provincial regulations – one size won't fit all (7);

- Mapping the coastal features and identify what needs to be protected from both climate change and development; Any ACAP type of model to manage water quality would be useful to manage and coordinate impact from land-based activity; Small working waterfronts are being starved of funds since Federal pullout (8);

- More integrated approach to coastal zone planning; More strict rules around coastal development (i.e. building homes/infilling) (9);

- Get beyond traditional government media and use rural/coastal groups that are directly impacted by the issues to be the delivery of information. More direct information from coastal communities/organizations (10);

- Consult with community groups. Vigorously enforce forestry and marine laws and standards. Put ecological integrity at the centre of all municipal planning/Provincial development (oil, gas, residential, recreational development) (11);

- Public awareness/acknowledgement and make governments/politicians consider these issues more seriously. Be involved in community/regional activities and participate [in] politics a bit more, e.g. voting or attending community meetings (12);

- Monitor/observe high risk areas where risk of pollution is high (13);

- Better public information! (14);

- Stricter rules around construction in coastal areas. Mitigation strategies to address sea rise issues (15);

- Government departments need to have a larger share of the monies spent. Too much time and money spent paving roads (16);

- See the interconnection of all; Manage/integrate the whole system (coastal, water, energy, etc); Set governance – not changes on political whim; Put long term before economic/political expediency; (Sure lots more – time an issue) (17)

- All those units who can influence (and improve) these issues must work together (18);

- Improved data management & communication; Introduction of Nova Scotia facts & figures into the school system (younger generation could gain an appreciation of how great NS is) (19);

- Public awareness; Erosion control encouraged, private & public (20);

- Collaborative networking – not trying to deal with issues singly (21);

- Be more aware of consequences when developing policy rather than jumping on bandwagons, i.e. industrial development (22);

## 6. Additional Comments?

- The people will do what needs to be done to help all those coastal issues – they need to understand them and they need to have the Province/Municipal units advise as to how to do it right. At this point in time, many people are not grasping the long-range problems (1);
- 2, 3 blank;
- Will have additional comments in the near future (4);
- 5, 6 blank;
- I recognize that PON is having to bring forward a coastal strategy in a really tough fiscal and inter-governmental environment, but there is increasing concern that, at the end of this phase of coastal policy development, the Province will continue to “manage the coastal file instead of managing the coast”. Please be sure to include some opportunities, however modest, for interested municipalities to access coastal management expertise and resources (as was just announced re: wind power) (7);
- This is a big issue that touches on many jurisdictions. Regardless of how the project is managed (as one province or regionally) municipalities should be directly involved sooner rather than later in the process; Most of these issues are connected so it is difficult to prioritize in Question #2 (8);
- Coastal salt marsh/wetlands have tended to receive very little protection when it comes to development. I would like to see some concrete rules around this topic and see a government department that would enforce these rules as a priority (9);
- Appreciate the identification of the key areas of concern so now others can contribute information in a more direct manner (10);
- I believe the tax system could be used to change how coastal areas are developed. Make all property owners pay higher taxes on second homes and development properties (11);
- 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 blank;
- Ensure this process/policies are not “made in Halifax” for urban perspectives. Involve and consider people who are more directly affected. Try to lose preconceived perspectives (ex: made by urbanites for urban – Energy Policy and finished product was very evident from meeting!) (17);
- 18, 19 blank;
- Don’t spend public money on private issues (20);
- Good initiative. Much work to be done (21);
- 22 blank;
- Thanks for the opportunity for input (23).

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

- It will be a useful reference source, at the very least (1);
- 2 blank;
- Background info – full report; Sharing the fact sheets on particular topics; Sharing the summary on email distribution list (3);
- Will use for consultations with the Mi'kmaq of NS (4);
- 5 blank;
- Raise awareness at other forums (6);
- Unless it leads to more than another paper agenda, I shall use it with the Coastal 2000 Report – as bookends (7);
- Time will tell (8);
- For education of clients/users; May have impact on how I apply my department's legislation (9);
- It will be reported in the web magazine – Rural Routes, read by the CCN board for background info in decision-making votes (10);
- To decide whether my elected representatives and civil servants are fulfilling their responsibility to protect the long-term values of our province (11);
- Forward the report/info to the community where I live, and/or to my friends, in order to make other people aware of what's going on/what issues are (12);
- Review for Agriculture related information (13);
- Stash? It and continue to react to ideas that it generates (14);
- To communicate with stakeholders (15);
- Will be used to get a better understanding of the issues (16);
- Will continue to be involved in groups that advocate for better regulations, enforcement, education and involvement of all populations (17);
- To better understand what is happening and how I can work to prevent further damages (18);
- With my job with NS Department of Agriculture, there is much overlap between departments and an awareness and appreciation is helpful! (19);
- Share with neighbours (20);
- Discussion points (21);

- Hold the stakeholders responsible to the findings of the report (22);
- Read it and pass it on to others (23).

### **Truro Open House - Table Notes**

(number in parenthesis represent check marks that indicate agreement)

#### **Coastal Development**

- We need a co-operation of economic ventures and environmental concerns. We also need both endeavors.

#### **Working Waterfronts**

- Why is aquaculture outside the terms of the Coastal Strategy?
  - It should be under coastal-strategy control. (1)
- Our working waterfronts support the largest economic impact in NS.
- How do we encourage younger folk to become part of this industry as we are so close to crisis - average age of NS fishermen is 56 years.

#### **Public Coastal Access**

- Public access to coastal areas and beaches (which are - or should be - fully accessible to everyone) is rapidly decreasing owing to closure of roads/tracks. Check the example of the North Shore of PEI - fully publicly accessible, no buildings (cottages, etc.) near the coasts.
- K-roads need to be kept for public access.

#### **Sea Level Rise and Storm Events**

- communities need guidance on setbacks and sea-rises.
- costs of damage caused by storms on water-level increase should be the responsibility of the property owners.
- Rising sea levels mean possible destruction of farmland near tidal streams.
- Municipalities need coastal plans to be clear where their liabilities are.

#### **Coastal Water Quality**

- Upstream pollution needs to be detected, noted and controlled (i.e. stopped - if possible). (1)
- Agricultural groups and fisheries have this issue in common.

#### **Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats**

(no comments)