

FRENCH RIVER SOURCE WATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the French River Source Water Protection Committee was held at the Tatamagouche Library on October 31, 2017 at 10:00 am.

- Present:** Councillor Mike Gregory, Chair
Deputy Mayor Bill Masters
Greg Watson, Citizen Rep
Kim Baldwin, Citizen Rep
Perry Swan, Village Commission Rep
Doug Bastow, North Shore River Restoration Group
- Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works
- Garth Demont, Department of Natural Resources
Geoffrey Baldwin, Department of Natural Resources
Michael Allen, Nova Scotia Environment (Watershed Planner)
- Regrets:** Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development
- Approval of Agenda:** The meeting was called to order at 10:16 am. The agenda was approved by the Committee with motion by Bill Masters, seconded by Doug Bastow.
- Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the meeting of July 8, 2017 were approved by the Committee with a motion by Greg Watson, seconded by Bill Masters.
- Mineral Exploration:** **Nevada Site Visit**
- Geoffrey Baldwin from DNR visited 3 Klondex mines in Nevada and gave a summary of his observations. The operation of these 3 mines is similar to what we could expect in the French River watershed. Since the potential gold deposits within our watershed are in veins, we could expect tunnel mining, similar to the Klondex mines. Of the 3 mines, only 1 had a tailings pond, which served all 3 sites. Tailings ponds are usually designed for the entire life of the mine, then capped when the operation ceases. These ponds are a long-term commitment and companies must usually post reclamation bonds with the province to ensure they remain environmentally responsible for their operations in the long term.
- Geoffrey noted that we are likely 10 years away from an actual mining operation, and so any public meetings would not occur for quite some time. Shaft-type mining should mean minimal site disturbance. One of the 3 Klondex sites was located in an archaeologically sensitive area, which restricted surface disturbance and require substantial consultation. Any mines in the French River watershed would likely require a cultural study to identify potential Mi'kmaq presence.

Most of the waste generated from a tunnel operation is from the initial tunneling. Otherwise, the mining will not generate an excessive amount of waste. As a follow up to the mining activities, there will likely be substantial drilling/exploration phase. Dewatering of the mines may require water to be pumped to the surface (pre-treated) which is not expected to affect any surface water flows or quality. There will likely be more intense water quality monitoring at the site within the watershed area.

Most companies are willing to work closely with local interests. Klondex is based out of Nevada but also has a Canadian office. Cyanide is still used in the gold extraction process, but this could be off-site.

Watershed Specific Considerations

Garth had previously circulated some materials via email regarding specific conditions for mining within a watershed. We could pull from this information in creating our own best management practices.

When they issue the RFP for the mining rights in the watershed, there will likely be a community engagement piece. As part of their proposal submission, proponents will also have to submit a community engagement plan. DNR expects that the RFP will be released at the end of March 2018. Garth will prepare a draft RFP. He noted that the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada may also have some best management practices which can be used as a resource for the RFP. The RFP will require processing outside of the watershed. Road construction could be an example of an issue that may have watershed impacts.

Garth noted again that anyone can stake a claim to mineral rights in NS, regardless of property ownership. There is a meeting scheduled for late November with the Warwick Mountain ATV club to discuss watershed activities and potential mining operations. Mike Gregory to post notices about this meeting, and to advise the NS Trust (given the property they recently acquired in the watershed). Greg Watson asked that a summary sheet of previous mining discussions at the committee level be prepared for this meeting. The committee also suggested that, at some point, DNR should present this information to Colchester County Council.

Signage:

Michael Gregory to provide contact info for Warwick Mountain ATV club, so that watershed map/sign installation can be coordinated. All other signs are in place.

Spray Programs:

No record of pesticide spraying in the watershed for 2017.

**Source Water Protection
Monitoring Program:**

No issues identified in staff's September review of watershed condition. No other changes in use noted by committee members. Michelle to provide Michael Gregory with the contact information for the person who recently inquired about building a campground within the watershed.

**Emergency Response
Plan:**

Michelle presented information on some proposed components of an Emergency Response Plan for water shortages, including EMO Nova Scotia's potential role. Michelle to draft a plan for review by the committee.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be on December 5th at 10:00 am, with the only agenda item being Best Management Practices for mining within the watershed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Moved by: Perry Swan
Seconded by: Doug Bastow



Michelle Newell