

FRENCH RIVER SOURCE WATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the French River Source Water Protection Committee was held at the Tatamagouche Branch Library on Oct 8, 2025, at 10:00am.

- Present:** Councillor Sherry Martell, Chair
Mayor Christine Blair
Jim Baird, Citizen Representative
Mark LeFresne, Village Commission Rep
Alex Feix, North Shore River Restoration Rep
Dan Troke, CAO
Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
- Absent/Regrets:** Greg Cummings, Watershed Planner, NSECC
Greg Watson, Citizen Rep, Watershed
- Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 10:03am.
- Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Jim Baird and seconded by Alex Feix.

“That the agenda be approved as presented to the Committee.”
Carried unanimously
- Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Mark LaFresne and seconded by Jim Baird.

“That the Minutes from the meeting of May 22, 2025, be approved as presented to the Committee.” Carried unanimously.
- Business Arising:** None.
- Sale of Northern Pulp Lands** As it stands, lands have not yet been sold but a confidential bid is reportedly under consideration. It is suspected that the buyer will operate and manage the woodlands in the same fashion as Northern Pulp. It is unclear if they would apply the triad model proposed under the Lahey report. The parcel measures thousands of acres and a portion is in the French River Watershed Area, more specifically the Northern part that reaches from Belmont Mountain to Truro Road. Greg Watson’s intent with adding it to the agenda was to provide notice to the new buyer that the land is partially within watershed areas.

A motion was put forward by Mayor Blair and Seconded by Mark Lafresne.

“That a letter be prepared for Northern Pulp requesting that they inform the prospective buyer of the property’s location within the watershed areas”. Carried unanimously.

Mark Lafrense recalled that Paul Smith committed to working with the Provincial land Registry to ensure that watershed lands are identified.

Paul noted that the watershed boundary has been identified on zoning maps, so if anyone applies for a permit, the watershed will be flagged. There are restrictions in place that there will be no heavy industrial uses established in watershed area.

Old Business Arising:

Blue Green Algae Study

Alex Feix asked for an update on the ongoing blue green algae studies. Michelle noted that Dalhousie continued to work in the watershed area during the 2025 Summer Season and did identify benthic mats in the rivers. No toxins were detected within the water samples, and there was no identified risk to drinking water, but the mats pose a hazard to humans or animals who may encounter the material during recreational use. The County posted related information on its social media platforms. Michelle to contact Dalhousie about presenting findings to the Source Water Protection Committee.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

A question was raised regarding the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid controls within the watershed area. Dan noted that the Province is getting more involved in providing information on potential control programs. Dan will reach out to groups involved around the Province. Approximately 10% of watershed area is Hemlock. Alex mentioned that there may be some Woolly Adelgid in Balmoral area. Any inoculation programs would need to consider the use of chemicals within the watershed area and would also require landowner permission. Could apply focus on critical areas like riverbanks. Staff to research and come back with information.

Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee:

Michelle clarified that there is a separate Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee (TWUC), and its mandate is focused on budgets and operations for the utility itself. Going forward, both the TWUC and this committee may meet on the same day, but they will remain 2 separate committees.

Alex inquired if we had considered carrying out any rocking projects along the French River to prevent further widening of the river. This would help with warming of waters, siltation, and will provide better fish habitat leading to better water quality. The committee could approach Council with a potential project if deemed feasible. Alex to provide additional details on the potential scope and cost of a rocking project at a future meeting. It was noted that perhaps the lead field person for the North Shore River Restoration Association, Brent Lock, could attend the next meeting and provide a presentation.

Update on Activities, North Shore River Restoration Group

Work was limited this year due to low water levels and forest restrictions. Most of the maintenance activities were primarily conducted in the French River and Waugh's River area with the use

of special travel permits. A lot of work was completed on Crowley Brook. The larger rock and tree planting projects had to be canceled. The work of the Association is expanding rapidly and now includes temperature loggers, and pH sensors. It was noted that funding remains a challenge, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid continues to present concern. The Association usually presents to Council every 5 years. The suggestion was made that we should look at a management plan for our watershed area.

**Annual Source Water
Protection Inspections**

Michelle circulated the inspection records for September 2025. The primary issue identified was the need to update watershed signage. Staff are aiming for January to have signs replaced and repaired.

Forestry Management Plan

Paul explained that the County engaged FRC to prepare a Forest Management Plan for all Municipality owned properties. It is a strategic and technical plan that focuses on County owned lands in and out of watershed areas. The intent was to identify priority projects and strategies to manage woodlands, and the next steps will focus on more detailed management plans. Paul to talk to FRC about attending next Source Water Protection Meeting to do a presentation. Paul is working to develop a related public information piece. Alex recommended talking to Todd Burgess at Forest NS and Dave Sutherland at the Association of Sustainable Forestry for input on forest management considerations. Greg Watson may also have suggestions on who we could meet with or how we could present information. The goal is to create a general overview information pamphlet that could also be used for the Debert and St. Andrews watershed areas of the County.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting date to be determined.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:49am.

Michelle Boudreau & Christa Wojcik
Recording Secretary