

PEI Recreational Fishing Policy Draft



PEI Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee with the assistance of the PEI Fish & Wildlife Division is in the process of developing a new “PEI Recreational Fisheries Policy”. They presently have a “Draft” available and are in the process of attaining input from various individuals and organizations across PEI. A final meeting will take place on **Tuesday Jan.31st at 7:00pm at the Farm Center on University Avenue.**



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Souris & Area Branch has responded to this request of input and you will find our recommendations on various issues relating to an angling:

Barbless hooks – They should be voluntarily encouraged and regulated through a period of time when smolt are heading downstream in specific rivers in the month of May or in accordance with river specific management.

Possession Limit – It was generally agreed with the status quo of possession limit to be left as is (8 fish in the freezer)

Trophy Trout Tags – After considerable deliberation it was agreed that the regulations on large trout should be left as they are? (No tags, only one fish per day over 16 inches). It was felt that tag system would be an enforcement nightmare and very costly.

River Specific management – Souris & Area Branch (SAB) is very supportive of river specific management and feels it should be highly encouraged on a broader scale.

PEI Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee –SAB feels this group should continue to provide advice to the Minister responsible for recreational fisheries. It was felt that the present system is working and various groups have input (possibility some tweaking). It was felt geography and membership from the PEI Watershed Alliance should be considered. It was also felt that if an organization sent a representative that refused to work in harmony with the remainder of the groups that that group would have to send forward another representative or face no representation

Enforcement – SAB suggests that there is a need for increased enforcement. SAB understands the workload that enforcement officers now encounter with very little time allotted towards enforcement of angling activities. It was also suggested that maybe it was time to re-visit the, “River Warden System” (without the red coats). Paul Gallant indicated in his years of being an enforcement officer he hadn’t had much problems with eel pots.

Watershed group involvement in recreational fisheries – SAB believes very strongly in the involvement of watershed groups in angling regulations. They also feel that the strength and history of the watershed group should directly correlate with the degree of its involvement. They also feel that organizations like Trout Unlimited, Atlantic Salmon Federation, PEI Watershed Alliance and PEI Wildlife Federation should also have input in this involvement.

Stocking Program – SAB feels the best method to increase fish populations is the supply of good habitat. SAB does believe that we have to support a hatchery for rivers that are in need of a recovery program and places where youth fishing can be promoted.

Angling opportunities – SAB suggests that we should increase angling opportunities. Our suggestions are as follows:

- A fall trout fishing, operating from Sept. 15-Oct. 31 (catch and release, artificial fly/lure, single hook and barbless) would be beneficial.
- Specific to eastern PEI, A pilot fishery that would involve a “catch and release” Atlantic salmon fishery, September 15-Oct.31 on Naufrage River and North Lake Creek. This pilot fishery could include several parameters (suitability of such an area for a fishery, numbers caught, size, sex, areas caught, fly fishing only, data collection, etc.)
- We really didn’t have much uptake of interest in a winter fishery for rainbow. If it were to happen, it would have to be on rivers with sufficient numbers and we question the amount of research that has been done on this. If it was limited to tidal areas or areas where there is no spawning activity we would agree to farther exploration.
- A winter fishery would depend on the viability and quality of fish, and only in ponds with no exit of water (gravel pits, Glennfinnon, O’Keefe, etc.) The idea of rotating ponds is a good idea. This idea would only be used if it would provide the opportunity but ensure conservation targets are met.
- SAB also suggested that a saltwater coastal fishery be investigated, with the catch and release of Atlantic salmon.



Public Approval Granted to the North Lake & Priest Pond Watershed Plans

In 2011, Tim Brothers finished the final draft for the North Lake and Priest Pond Watershed Plans. The SAB held a final meeting on November 28th to present this plan to the public and gain approval for proposed changes.

The meeting was well received and most of the discussion centered on changing the buffer zone in both watersheds from 15 meters to 60 meters. By increasing the buffer zone, this will ensure the riparian zone surrounding these watersheds will remain untouched and pristine. Approximately 80% of the land is forested with the other 20% agricultural lands. This greatly attributes to the health of both watersheds. There was overwhelming approval for this proposed change.

The community’s approval was necessary to take this to the next step; which will be implementation of a new bylaw enforcing the 60 meter buffer zone. The Eastern Kings Community Council is updating their bylaws in 2012 and the council will take this to the province for approval.

Update on 2011 Wildlife Photo Contest

The submission of photos for the 2011 Wildlife Photo Contest is now closed. The Awards Banquet, originally scheduled for January 2012, has been postponed for various reasons. The webmaster in charge of the contest is battling health issues and needs time to focus on his health. As well, one of the judges was in a serious car accident and is recovering. We anticipate the awards banquet will be held in spring 2012.

Photographers are asked to save their photos for the 2012 contest and will be notified when they can be submitted. For more information and to view submitted photographs visit www.souriswl.ca/contests.htm

Interested in Becoming a Member?

2012 Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation Memberships are available. Membership fees are only \$10. To become a member contact our office at (902) 687-4115 or email sourisareawildlife@gmail.com. There are currently 200 active members.

There are many benefits of becoming a member:

- Participate free of charge in SAB activities
- Free catch and release fishing at Rollo Bay Pond
- Receive colored email copies of newsletters
- Voting privileges on resolutions at our annual meeting
- Enhance and preserve the environment in Eastern Kings through community support



Photograph by Joanne Dunphy

Rollo Bay Pond Work

Rollo Bay Pond is an important fishing area for the SAB activities. Each year, it is the site of our Family Fishing Day, where community members can fish free of charge in a stocked pond. Many people do not get the chance to enjoy the fishing experience therefore it is an important aspect in creating an interest in recreational fishing throughout the community

The pond itself needed work to combat drainage issues. In collaboration with property owner Paul Gallant, staff assisted in installing a large gate valve at the exit of the existing spillway. As well, to increase water levels in the pond, water was rerouted so it now drains from higher elevations.

The shed at the pond also had some major repairs done. New fencing was installed lining the road leading into the pond as well as around the pond.

A SAB membership allows one to fish, catch and release, free of charge at Rollo Bay Pond. We hope more members will take advantage of this fishing location when the 2012 recreational fishing season opens in April.

31st Annual Wildlife Fundraising Dinner Donors

The 31st Annual Souris & Area Wildlife Fundraising Dinner was a huge success. Without the contributions from our donors, this dinner would not be possible. The SAB raised approximately \$6000 from this dinner with funds going towards various environmental projects in our management area. We would like to acknowledge these donors who make this dinner possible:

- A & M Auto Parts
- Agra West Foods
- Arthur Mooney & Sons Limited
- Arnold Dixon
- Atlantic Fish Specialties
- Atlantic Salmon Federation
- Atlantic Shellfish
- Billy Gillam
- Cahill Construction
- Canadian Tire
- Cavendish Agri Services
- Chris Collier
- CJ Fly's
- Colville Bay Frame Shop
- Daisy A Day Flowers
- Delta Prince Edward
- Down East Auto and Marine
- Ducks Unlimited
- Fair Isle Ford
- Fish & Wildlife Division
- Foster Campbell Electric
- Gahan House Pub Brewery & Mercantile
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- Golf Links PEI
- Hansen Electric
- Hilary Cheverie
- Home Hardware (Stratford)
- Hunter's Ale House
- Island Deli Scallops
- Island Nature Trust

- Jansen McKinnon & Associates
- Jim Cahill Septic Service
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- J.W. McCloskey Financial Services
- Kings County Chrysler
- Lou Douse
- Lucy Maud Dining Room
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- MacLean's Ready Mix
- MacPhee's Save Easy
- Main Street Home Hardware
- Maritime Mosquito Control
- Myriad View Distillery
- Natural History Society
- Naturally Yours
- Neil and Patricia Hunter
- Outdoor Women
- PEI Department of Agriculture
- PEI Department of Environment, Energy & Forestry
- PEI Department of Tourism and Culture
- PEI Mussel King
- Paul and Faye Gallant
- Prince Edward Distillery
- Prompt Plumbing
- Purity Dairy
- Renee's Seaglass
- Rodd Hotels and Resorts
- Rollo Bay Holdings
- Russell Ching Limited
- Sheltered Harbour Café
- Shareware
- Souris Credit Union
- Souris Harbour Authority Inc.
- Souris Pharmasave
- Steve Cheverie
- Things To Rent
- Town of Souris
- Trout Unlimited
- Vernon d'Eons
- Wildlife Habitat Canada
- Wine Kitz

Once again, a huge thank you to all businesses and volunteers! Without you, this dinner would not be possible.

Watershed Evaluation of Beneficial Management Practices (WEBs) Update

Souris & Area Branch has partnered with Agriculture Canada, PEI Department of Agriculture, Nova Scotia Agriculture College, University of Prince Edward Island and Canadian Rivers Institute in a project entitled WEBs (Watershed Evaluation of Beneficial Management Practices). We have three of our local producers, Rollo Bay Holdings, Lily Pond Farms and Arthur Mooney & Sons involved. The purpose of this research project is to determine if fall ploughing leaches much more nitrates into our groundwater than spring ploughing. The hope of this research study is to determine the exact amounts. This study is also to determine the increased associate costs with spring ploughing with the producer and other potential problems that spring ploughing can bring to the producer (lumps, increased pests, etc.)

Souris Wildlife Branch input is to be the site administrator and collector of data with water samples taken from various homes, streams, tile drains, automated samplers, lysimeters, shallow wells and deeper wells. Some of this sampling is done on a regular weekly basis and some is done on an irregular monthly basis. We are having a very fortunate winter so far as we can get our trucks to the sites.

Everything is progressing on schedule, with all partners actively involved. Similar projects with different types of agriculture research take place in most provinces in Canada with Souris being the only one on PEI. A presentation on the scope of research on this project will be presented in Ottawa in early February at a national conference with presentations from all across Canada.



SAB Coordinator Fred Cheverie collecting a water sample from a tile drain at MacIsaac's



WEBs Hydrologist Yefang Jiang testing nitrate levels from a well at Mooney's field



SAB Coordinator Fred Cheverie (middle) talks with Lily Pond Farms producers Kevin MacIsaac (left) and Joe MacIsaac (right)

Department of Fisheries & Oceans Conference: Basin Head

Basin Head is one of eight Marine Protected Areas in Canada, and one of two accessible by land. A Marine Protected Area is ecologically significant area, with species and/or properties that require special consideration.

The species of interest in Basin Head is *Chondrus crispus*, or Irish Moss. The Irish Moss at Basin head is a unique strain found nowhere else in the world. This strain is different as it does not attach to the bottom and is much larger than the regular plant.

On December 5th and 6th, a conference was held in Moncton hosted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Regional Office. SAB Coordinator Fred Cheverie and Assistant Coordinator Jill MacPhee attended this conference along with a delegation of DFO personnel from PEI.

The main discussion at this conference was the depletion of the Irish Moss. Many hypotheses were put forward by various DFO scientists on the disappearance. SAB then gave a local perspective outlining the problems at Basin Head.

From here, a new plan of action on how to monitor Irish Moss and the entire ecosystem will be put forward. SAB was pleased to partner with DFO in many projects in Basin Head this field season and look forward to continuing this partnership.



SAB staff involved in the annual Salmon redds counts. From left to right: Michael Jacklyn, Tony Meade, Trevor Jarvis, Fred Cheverie, David Caines, Harry Meade

Annual Atlantic Salmon Redd Surveys Show Record Breaking Numbers

Annual Atlantic salmon redd counts are conducted to monitor populations in our management area. Historically, four rivers in our management area host annual runs of Atlantic salmon. These rivers include North Lake, Priest Pond, Cross River and Naufrage River.

Trained staff walked all systems to assess for redds. Once redds were confirmed their location was entered into a handheld GPS. These coordinates were then transferred to maps to accurately display locations and areas with high densities and those with lower densities.

According to Daryl Guignon's 2009 report, "A Conservation Strategy for Atlantic Salmon on Prince Edward Island," Atlantic salmon had disappeared from Cow River, Bear River and Hay River since 2002. This year not only did we find redds in two of these rivers but had huge increase in redds in all other rivers. This success can be

attributed to diligent work in keeping all main branches and tributaries open, as well as various other stream enhancement techniques.

The number of redds found in each system have increased each year since 2006. Atlantic salmon are considered a “species at risk”, which is the step above becoming endangered. The following table shows a comparison between the last two years of Atlantic salmon redd counts:

	# of redds (2010)	# of redds (2011)
North Lake	265	355
Priest Pond	16	20
Cross River	133	191
Naufrage	33	429
Hay River	0	4
Bear River	0	0
Cow River	0	1



An Atlantic salmon redd at East Baltic Brook on November 29, 2011



Partnership with Souris Striders Ski Club

The Souris Striders Ski Lodge was home to the SAB for the past year. With the influx of staff, SAB needed a larger office to function at maximum capacity. With stream work no longer permitted in late fall, SAB decided to offer its services to the Souris Striders Ski Club. We aided with much needed repairs on the trails as well as the lodge itself.

New windows were installed on both levels of the lodge as well as other minor projects to the building. The building on the trail had some major work completed. Last season, this building was unusable. A new window, shutters, shingles, and door were all installed in addition to the exterior getting a fresh coat of paint.

The trees on the trails were all limbed back to widen the trails. The lights lining the three kilometer trail were all fixed and surrounding branches were cleared. The SAB was pleased to aid with this much needed work as the Ski Club has been more than accommodating the past year.

Coordinator's Comments

It has been an unusual January with a weekly "January Thaw" which has been great for getting the truck to the back fields, but unfortunate for skiers and snowshoers. Souris Wildlife Branch has maintained its office at the Souris Ski Club and is sharing a space downstairs. Jill MacPhee will continue as Assistant Watershed Coordinator as our workload has increased with year round projects.

As I meet people on the street, they often inquire as to the type of work that we would be doing during the winter months. We have a contract with Agriculture and Agri - Food Canada that requires water sampling done regularly on surface water (springs, streams), farm drain tiles, deep water wells, shallow wells, and lysimeters. We prepare final reports with extensive documentation on projects which we have received funding during the spring and fall seasons. We also begin our preparation for next year by writing various proposals in the hopes of acquiring funds for the next fiscal year. We do school presentations on various environmental topics that teachers request. We also do public presentations on request on various topics related to the work we do. We attend various seminars within the Maritimes that educates us on environmental issues that pertain to our area. We attempt to publish as many newsletters as we can afford which takes some considerable time. Needless to say the "unknown factors" that relate to every job creep in on a daily basis.

I have to admit that I really enjoy this job as watershed coordinator and would generally like to thank all the landowners in our management area that allow us to pass through your property , doing stream enhancement work.



Fred Cheverie – Coordinator of the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation

President's Comments

It was decided at our last monthly meeting to change the format of our regular monthly meetings, by attempting to organize guest speakers for each of our meetings that would be advertised and open to the public of all ages. Each of these presentations will be approximately 30 minutes long with ample opportunities for questions.

Our first guest speaker Brad Potter, from Fish & Wildlife Division will do a presentation on Sharp Tailed Grouse that was introduced to PEI by Souris & Area Branch in the 1980's. Brad has done an extensive study of these birds and will focus his presentation, on: population densities, adaptability, and future challenges. Brad will also discuss introductions of Ring Necked Pheasants and Hungarian Partridge on PEI.

The first presentation will take place on **Wednesday, February 22 at 7:30 at Souris Striders Ski Club**. Everyone is welcome with tea and coffee being served.



Joe MacDonald – President of the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation

Interested in making a donation to the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation? Simply fill out this form and mail it to us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Province: _____

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Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Cheques may be made payable to the PEI Wildlife Federation. An official charitable tax receipt will be issued.