

CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NEW BRUNSWICK

WINTER 2015

ecoalert



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Major Savings with
Energy Retrofit



SHALE GAS MORATORIUM

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ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Sometimes making **small changes** and adjustments can make a **big difference** in your electricity bill.



HEAT

Lower your thermostat to **16°C** while sleeping or when you are away.

Wear slippers or socks and a warm sweater instead of setting thermostats higher. Turning the heat down by just **two degrees** can reduce your home heating costs by **four per cent**.

At the end of the heating season, make sure all baseboard heaters are "**off**" at the circuit breaker in your electrical panel.



HOT WATER

Use only enough hot water to do your dishes - **don't fill the sink if you don't have to**.

Wash only full loads in the dishwasher and **skip the dry cycle** by selecting the eco-settings.

Never let hot water run while you do other things like cleaning counters, sinks, etc.



BATHING AND SHOWERING

Take **short showers**, 10 minutes or less, whenever possible.

Turn off your hot water while shaving and use only for rinsing.



LAUNDRY

Wash **only full loads** of clothes.

Use cold water as much as possible.



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CONSERVATION COUNCIL
OF NEW BRUNSWICK

180 St. John Street

Fredericton New Brunswick

Canada E3B 4A9

www.conservationcouncil.ca

Tel: (506) 458-8747 Fax: (506) 458-1047

Email: info@conservationcouncil.ca

For advertising inquiries, please contact:

MANAGING EDITOR

Jon MacNeill,

jon.macneill@conservationcouncil.ca

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Stacy Howroyd,

design@makeanimprint.ca

editorial

MESSAGE FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Sun is Rising

2015 could be a stellar year for conservation and environmental protection in New Brunswick, and we here at the Conservation Council are hopeful.

Why? Well, because December 2014 was so shiny.

New Brunswick's provincial government started out on a great foot — bringing in a moratorium on fracking for shale gas. The announcement came just a few days after citizens in New York State and Quebec heard similar news from their leadership — momentum that was bolstered again with Scotland's ban early in the New Year.

The NB announcement was welcome news. Not only does fracking threaten our water, but having a moratorium in place lets us turn the page on that chapter of our province's history and begin writing the much more exciting chapter of transforming our economy into a sustainable and climate-friendly force that's fuelled by green jobs.

That's no exaggeration. There are so many exciting things happening within the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors that it is hard to stay on top of it all. Solar panels cost 150x less today than they did in the 70s. The power-generating capacity of solar and wind technology has doubled every two years for the last 10 years, with no signs of slowing down. These things, coupled with the ongoing advancements in electric cars, photo voltaic battery storage, heat pumps and other energy efficiency measures are all converging to make a smarter, cleaner, and safer world possible.

After all, chasing every last molecule of oil and gas — whether it is buried deep in shale or mixed in with sand in the tarsands — flies in the face of the hard reality that burning fossil fuels is driving climate change. We know New Brunswickers are serious about our rapidly shifting climate. And a poll released in late November found the majority of Canadians share the same values and concern, with 88 per cent of Canadians saying they want our leadership to commit to significant new climate actions.

So, will this be the year we see action on climate change and environmental protection, here at home and abroad? We think so, because the dominoes are lining up:

- In November, we all watched as United States and China unveiled ambitious targets to reduce pollution. Huge news from the world's economic superpowers.

- Just a few weeks ago, we saw another great step forward — the US and India agreement on driving renewable energy development and deployment. This will not only bring fresh air and a big political boost to the global push toward a clean climate (all leading up to the United Nations treaty negotiations that are supposed to be finalized in Paris in 2015), but will also immediately create jobs in a sector destined to help us ease away from our dependence on oil and coal.

- New Brunswick has a climate change action plan that when first introduced (eight years ago now) was one of the best. With an ambitious, job-focused government in place, it could serve as a platform to increase economic activity. By creating additional programs to help people reduce emissions, introducing a province-wide program to retrofit homes and businesses, and a plan to develop renewable energy — helping us put solar panels on our roofs, for example — we could re-claim a leadership position on the East Coast and create thousands of jobs.

Our 2015 checklist could also be rounded out with a river and stream classification program finally put in place; a commitment to review the forest management strategy with an eye toward better protection of conservation areas, old growth stands and deer wintering yards (and supporting local job creation); an end to herbicide spraying on Crown lands; new measures to protect wetlands; and a fleshed-out plan to protect our coastal areas.

It seems like a long list but, in reality, a lot of the work has already been done. What we need now is strong political will — empowered by voices from people like you — and we can watch together as the sun breaks over a new era in New Brunswick.

— Lois Corbett, Executive Director,
Conservation Council of New Brunswick
lois.corbett@conservationcouncil.ca





Well-Being on the Water: Meet Our New President

If you ask Liane Thibodeau why she's passionate about environmental protection, she's more likely to tell you about a place - specifically, the water surrounding the Kingston Peninsula - than give you a list of reasons.

"There is a feeling you get when you're out here and there is mist in the morning and the water is so calm reflections are showing," Liane says. "It's unbelievable how beautiful it is. And it just gives you such a sense of well-being and peace that you want to make sure it's there for people to enjoy for the long term. You want to protect it."

For Liane, sharing positive stories about the beauty and meaning of our natural spaces is an important part of how we keep them around for generations to come. And it's a big piece of the focus she brings as the new president of the Conservation Council's board of directors.

Liane was welcomed as board president during our annual meeting in late 2014. She replaced longtime president Stephanie Coburn, who stepped down after 14 years of dedicated service.

A retired human resources consultant, Liane first got involved with the environmental movement in New Brunswick three decades ago. Then in her late 20s and living along the Miramichi River, she participated in a campaign to raise awareness of creosote contamination by a plant in Newcastle.

Led by local activists and organic farmers Ben and Vera Baldwin, the group submitted articles to newspapers, did interviews with local television and radio stations, and pressured government to act on the issue.

From there, Liane worked with the Miramichi Environmental Society on several campaigns: speaking out against increased air and water pollution resulting from a large expansion of the pulp and paper mill, against clear-cutting and chemical-spraying forestry practices that not only destroyed wildlife habitat but also significantly reduced employment, and preventing the construction of an antimony trioxide roasting plant that threatened the local environment and residents' health.

She stepped away from campaigning for a while when she moved to Fredericton in the mid-90s, focusing on her consulting career and later her human resource consulting business.

However, as was the case with many New Brunswickers, the prospect of shale gas development taking place across the province spurred her into action once more.

Liane connected with organizers along the Kingston Peninsula (where she and her partner now live), and was immediately inspired by the energy she witnessed at the grassroots level.

"If you'd asked me 30 years ago if we would see 1,500 people marching in Fredericton for clean water, I would have never believed that would be possible," Liane says.

But seeing that kind of passion, and the positive results it can produce (read our article on the shale gas moratorium in this issue!), makes Liane think there is a real shift happening in New Brunswick, where more and more people are getting serious about addressing climate change.

She sees the Conservation Council playing an important role in that process by sharing positive stories about energy efficiency, renewable power, and other ways we can make our communities clean and sustainable.

"It's not all doom and gloom - in fact, far from it," Liane says. "And I'm often reminded of my favourite quote, from Margaret Mead: *'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'*"

ecoevents

Feb. 3 – March 3

The National Energy Board (NEB) begins accepting applications to participate in the Energy East oil pipeline hearing on Feb. 3. It is crucial New Brunswickers have their say about this project! See our article in this issue or visit our website to learn how you can get involved before the March 3 deadline.

Wednesday, March 11

TREEvia Night returns! Round up a team and enjoy some tree-themed trivia in support of CCNB. Register by calling 458-8747 or visit our website for more details!

<http://www.conservationcouncil.ca/treevia-returns>

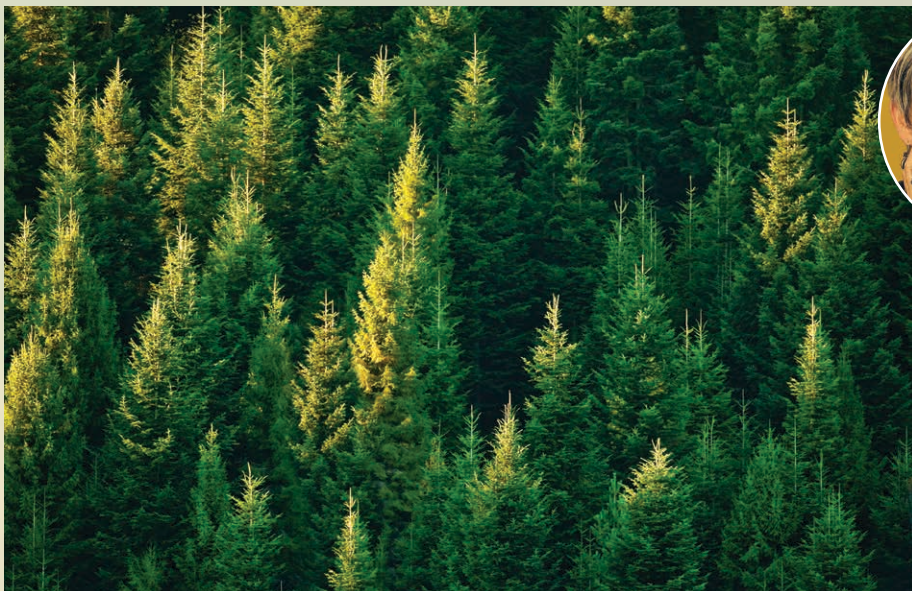
March 28: Earth Hour

Earth Hour started in 2007 as a lights-off event to raise awareness about climate change. It has since grown to engage more than 162 countries and territories worldwide. Stay posted to our website to learn about participating New Brunswick cities as the big day and big hour (March 28 at 8:30 p.m.) approaches!

Now – April 9: Recycle your old electronics!

In recognition of World Water Day, the UNB Art Centre in Fredericton is welcoming people to drop off their outdated or broken electronics - old batteries, cell phones, VCRs, microwaves, TVs, etc. - to Memorial Hall to be recycled any time before April 9. Help prevent soil and water contamination from E-waste!

If you have an ecoevent to include in our calendar, email us at info@conservationcouncil.ca, or call 458-8747.



Researching Smart, Sustainable Forest Policy

Our Forest Conservation program is looking into how other jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere manage forest resources to see how we stack up in New Brunswick. We'll release a report comparing the modern forest management policies used in other parts of the world with the outcome-based approach being proposed for our public forests through the new forest plan. In December, the provincial government released details of the forestry agreements signed between industry and the previous government last year. Our program coordinator Tracy Glynn says that was a good first step in fulfilling the new government's promise to review the contracts and forestry plan.

We're confident the Liberal government will revise the forest plan once ministers study the ecological, social and economic impacts of implementing it. CCNB will be calling on the government to develop a modern *Crown Lands and Forest Sustainability Act* that protects sensitive areas such as along riverbanks and streams, preserves old growth stands, protects areas that are important for deer, lynx and other woodland creatures, and bans herbicide spraying in public forests, like Quebec has done for more than a decade.

*Want more info? Connect with:
Tracy Glynn, Forest Campaign Director
tracy.glynn@conservationcouncil.ca or visit
www.acadianforest.ca*



Beth Powning, Carla Gunn and Gerard Beirne

An Evening at Conserver House

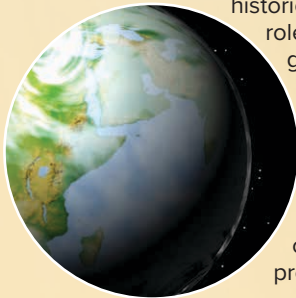
Literature lovers of all ages gathered at Conserver House one stormy evening in early December for a special CCNB fundraiser. 'Stories Out Loud' featured readings and an open discussion with three accomplished and award-winning New Brunswick authors, Beth Powning, Carla Gunn and Gerard Beirne. The event - thrown with support from Picaroons Traditional Ales, Goose Lane Editions, Westminster Books and Tony's Music Box - transformed our office into a cozy, intimate and festive venue, drawing a standing-room-only crowd despite the blustering wind and freezing rain coming down outside.

Guest sipped hot cider or craft beer, nibbled on finger foods and snacks, and heard stories and shared in lively discussion with these incredibly talented writers. The evening was such a success, we've resolved to hold many more! Be sure to check our website for news on future book readings, poetry nights, and other literary events coming to Conserver House throughout 2015.

-Jon MacNeill

World's top polluters announce monumental shift on climate change action

The push for a low-carbon future got a major dose of political will this November as the governments of China and the U.S. announced a joint agreement on climate change. The agreement was called historic by many and acknowledges the critical role both countries must play in combating global climate change, with the U.S. aiming for an economy-wide reduction of emissions to 26-28 per cent below its 2005 levels (by 2025), and China striving to reach peak CO2 emissions by 2030, among other measures. With China and the U.S. now talking tough and acting on climate change, Canada will feel even more pressure to follow suit.



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Alan Hudson, Winemaker

940 Route 495, Mundleville NB, Canada E4W 2N5

Winery: 506 523 9056

ahudson@nbnet.nb.ca
www.RichibuctoRiverWineEstate.com



The Smiths: Energy Profile

Annual Utility Costs

Heating/Lighting/Appliances \$312

Energy Retrofit Expenses

Photovoltaic System	\$16000
Air Exchanger/Heat Pump	\$12500
Triple Glazed Windows	\$7000
Thermal Solar Hot Water	\$6500
Government Rebate	(\$9000)
Total investment	\$33,000

Before the upgrades, their power bill averaged \$100/month plus 2-3 cords of wood per winter.

After the upgrades, their power bill averages around \$26/month (basically just service charge), plus 2-3 cords of wood per winter.

For their PV system, the Smiths borrowed \$16,000 from the bank at 4% interest, resulting in a payment of \$640/year. The panels can generate 6,200 KWh/year, which works out to \$650 worth of power generation per year. So, looking at the PV system, the money the Smiths save by making their own power (at today's rate) more than covers what they must pay down on the system each year. And if the power rate goes up, the payback period is even shorter.

Harnessing the Power of the Sun's Rays

Heather and Blane Smith are enjoying major savings since making their Sackville home more energy efficient. Plus, the couple is never out of something to talk about.

Sunlight beams through the south-facing window of Blane and Heather Smith's kitchen, filling the room with light and warmth on a recent crisp fall day.

The couple has just finished laying out a lunch spread to share with a house guest, but all they really want to do is show their visitor the latest gadget to enter their Sackville home - a solar power inverter mounted in the basement.

"Blane says he's putting in wood on a day like today," says Heather, gesturing outside to the clear, sunny sky.

"Solar wood, he calls it."

The Smiths recently completed a series of upgrades and renovations to their 26-year-old home through Efficiency NB's Residential Energy Efficiency Program.

The work saw the installation of new, triple-glazed windows, a solar hot water system, and 24 photovoltaic panels on the roof, among other improvements.

The panels, quite fittingly, began generating power on June 21, 2013 - the first day of summer. Combined with measures to improve the envelope of their 1,800-square-foot home, an increased awareness of the energy they consume on a daily basis, and the gradual purchase of more energy-efficient appliances, the couple now enjoy a monthly power bill that hovers around \$26 and change - basically just the service charge.

"Right now, on a sunny day, our house is more than likely running only on the solar electricity alone," says Blane, who doesn't try to hide his excitement when talking about the panels.

"It's interesting. It's fun. And it's so easy."

Founding members of the Sackville-based Energreen Builders Cooperative, the Smiths were no strangers to the benefits of energy efficiency.

But all the same, Heather says they still needed some sort of epiphany, a moment to make them realize, as she puts it, "Hey, that could be us installing panels or a new heat

pump - not just something other people are doing, but something we could do."

For the Smiths, that moment came during a workshop on the long-term benefits of energy efficient homes, hosted by Efficiency NB.

They were intrigued, contacted the government agency, and had an initial energy audit done in March 2013.

The audit assigned their home a rating based on how energy efficient it was then, and presented the homeowners with a list of upgrades and renovations to improve their score, accompanied by the government incentive provided for each improvement made.

The couple opted for a number of upgrades: all new windows from a company in Cape Breton, new weather stripping and attic insulation that took them from R30 to nearly R60, two thermal solar hot water panels, a heat pump and heat recovery air exchange, and PV panels installed by Fundy Solar.

Nearly a decade ago, the Smiths had two solar panels installed on a cabin they own in Nova Scotia, taking it off-grid. Blane says he was blown away by how affordable the technology has become since then. At that time, he paid around \$300 for a 40W panel - the same price he paid for each of the 235W panels affixed to the roof of his home now.

"There's a sixfold difference there, the price has dropped that much in just seven or eight years."

All told, the couple spent upwards of \$42,000 on improvements, with the PV system (\$16,000) and heat pump (\$12,500) running the highest tabs. Their home's energy efficiency rating shot from 76 to 90 as a result of the work completed, and they recovered \$9,000 in government incentives, including the \$4,000 net-zero bonus.

Blane says that may sound like a hefty upfront investment, "but because it's spread out over so many years, the monthly story is that your energy savings more than cover the additional mortgage payment."

And besides, you only have to talk to the Smiths about energy efficiency for a few

The Smiths opted for a number of upgrades: all new triple-glazed windows from a company in Cape Breton, new weather stripping, two thermal solar hot water panels, a heat pump and heat recovery air exchange, and a system of photo voltaic panels.



minutes to see they've clearly benefited from the project far beyond mere dollars and cents.

"It's always a curiosity to walk by the inverter and see, 'how many kilowatt hours did we make today?'" Blane says.

"I turn 60 this winter, so for me, it was important to do something interesting, something fun, and this has been it. You can't produce oil yourself. But for the average person, if they have a small house and a little bit of sunshine, you can actually make some electricity for yourself. And you're never out of something to talk about."

Indeed, and they've found others are eager to listen.

"We sat here in the sun one Sunday afternoon and told our friends what we were going to do, and they went right home and called Woody Thompson (of Fundy Solar) to do it on their house, too," says Heather, chuckling.

As much as the Smiths have inspired those around them to explore energy efficiency and renewable power, they're quick to offer credit to the crown agency that got the ball rolling for them.

"I think Efficiency New Brunswick raised the awareness for everybody about all kinds of stuff, not just the sticker on your fridge," Blane says.

"You need that person from whom you can get a definitive answer," adds Heather. "You hear a lot of different talk and read a lot of different things, and it can be confusing. So

it was very important to have Efficiency NB there. With them being so aware of all the aspects, they can give you an answer that is right for your house."

While disappointed the former provincial government made moves to discontinue the agency, the Smiths were pleased to see the new government announce it is reinstating the home energy retrofit program under the umbrella of NB Power.

"We think it's been a steady, positive influence on the population, and it's a positive thing for government to do for societies," Heather says.

"So often things don't have such a positive impact on everyday people, while addressing something larger, too, like global warming. So it's on both scales: it's good for the local economy, it's good for peoples' heat bills, and it's the type of long-term, forward-thinking program that governments are supposed to do for us. Promoting energy efficiency is one of those things that can only be positive."

Heather strongly encourages anyone thinking of participating in the new programming through NB Power to follow through and do it.

"It's a worthwhile thing to do in and of itself," she says. "Don't be discouraged by people saying, 'Oh you can't really have an effect anyway, what difference can you make?' You have to start somewhere. Do what little bit you can do, and over time you can do more, but it's no excuse not

to do anything just because you can't do everything.

"You have to start with what you can do, and know that you're doing what you can, and know that every little bit you do does make a difference."

—Jon MacNeill

DID YOU KNOW?



Renewable energy employs way more people than you think!

A new report from climate think tank *Clean Energy Canada* shows the country's green energy sector has grown so quickly in recent years it now employs more people than the oil sands. The report came out in early December and said upwards of \$25-billion has been invested in Canada's clean energy sector over the past five years, roughly the same as the investments in agriculture, fishing and forestry combined. And jobs aren't the only thing on the rise - the report showed the energy-generating capacity of wind, solar, hydro and biomass plants has expanded by 93 per cent since 2009.

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NB PREMIERS AWARD FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY- 2014

National Energy Board Hearing

Applications to participate become available February 3, 2015.

Deadline to apply to participate: March 3, 2015

For more information contact Tracy Glynn:

tracy.glynn@conservationcouncil.ca



The endangered Right Whale is just one species threatened by the potential for increased tanker traffic and oil spills in the Bay of Fundy if the Energy East pipeline project is allowed to happen.

Standing up for our Whales, Water, and the Bay of Fundy

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick is joining the chorus of groups speaking out against the dangers posed by the Energy East oil pipeline and we're asking members for help in making our voices heard.

The Alberta-based company TransCanada Corporation is seeking approval to build upwards of 1,400-kilometres of pipeline in New Brunswick as part of its proposal to ship 1.1 million barrels per day of crude oil from the tar sands in Alberta to facilities in Quebec and Saint John.

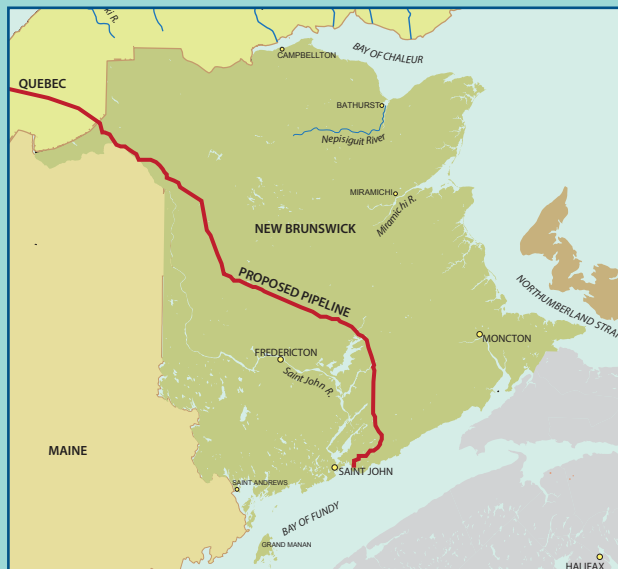
This would be the first oil pipeline to cross our province and we're seriously concerned that the project will threaten our water, land, and the livelihoods of hundreds of farmers, fishers and tourism operators in New Brunswick.

The proposed route for the pipeline in our province crosses hundreds of acres of farmland, many important waterways (including the Miramichi, St. John and Tobique rivers, Grand Lake, and the Bay of Fundy), and several watersheds critical for our communities.

Construction of the pipeline has the potential to lower property values for people living along or near the route. A spill caused from a break in the pipe would be devastating, spewing one million litres of sticky oil in just 10 minutes - enough to fill a hockey rink to the top of the boards.

But you have a say on whether this pipeline goes ahead. The project must be approved by the National Energy Board (NEB) and anyone who stands to be impacted can apply to participate in the energy board's review of the project.

It is very important that the National Energy Board hear from New Brunswickers before making its decision. We are calling



on all members who will be affected by this project to participate in the NEB hearing. We need you to stand up for your land, water and livelihood by answering this call to action.

We will provide step-by-step instructions and are glad to offer any help you need in order to get involved. Contact Tracy Glynn with the Conservation Council (tracy.glynn@conservationcouncil.ca, or 506-458-8747) for more information or to sign up for Energy East oil pipeline updates and action alerts.

Here's a quick rundown of how the NEB process works:

In order to participate as either a commenter (someone who can submit letters outlining their concerns with the pipeline) or an intervener (someone who can speak at the pipeline hearing), the first thing you need is permission to take part. It seems kind of odd - having to ask for permission to give your input - but only those who apply to participate can offer their feedback to the

energy board.

In order for the NEB to accept your application to participate, you must be considered someone who will be 'directly affected' by the pipeline, or someone who has 'relevant knowledge or expertise' related to the impact of the pipeline.

Some examples of people who will be directly affected include those whose home, land, business or job is near the proposed route, or someone who hunts, fishes, or enjoys other recreational activities near the route.

Examples of those with relevant knowledge or expertise include medical doctors and other health professionals, economists, engineers, and First Nations who have an extensive understanding of the history and cultural significance of areas that could be affected by a pipeline.

The NEB will begin accepting applications to participate in the Energy East hearing on Feb. 3, 2015. Applications will be available on the NEB webpage and the application period lasts only four weeks. Anyone interested in having their say must apply to participate before the deadline of March 3, 2015 at 3 p.m. AST.

Again, it is crucial that a significant number of New Brunswickers become involved in this process. We urge all members to apply to participate in the hearing, and encourage anyone with questions to contact Tracy Glynn at tracy.glynn@conservationcouncil.ca or by phone at 506-458-8747.

Together, we can protect our land and livelihoods, keep our rivers and well water clean, and preserve the natural beauty of the Bay of Fundy, with its majestic whales, breathtaking coastline, and important fisheries.

Illustration: Stacy Howroyd



TransCanada Corp's proposed oil pipeline has the potential to negatively impact many of our marine creatures, from playful seals to tiny, ecosystem-supporting krill.

Regulatory changes strip Environment Canada oversight and exempt pesticides from *Fisheries Act*

The Fundy Baykeeper and CCNB's Science Advisor have been keeping a close eye on changes the federal government is proposing for aquaculture regulation in Canada. The process began in 2010 and the proposed changes are now one step away from coming into effect. If enacted, these regulations will facilitate pesticide and drug use on salmon farms despite the risk these chemicals pose to other marine wildlife, like lobsters and the many small crustaceans that form the base of the marine food chain.

The changes will also mean Environment Canada no longer provides oversight and enforcement for the sector. Instead, aquaculture companies will be responsible for reporting any problems with pesticide use.

This is particularly alarming for our *Fundy Baykeeper* Matthew Abbott, who says Environment Canada is the only agency capable of effective oversight. Abbott also cited the recent episode of illegal pesticide use by a major Canadian salmon farming company as reason to leave enforcement



Matthew Abbott, www.fundybaykeeper.ca

and oversight in the hands of a government agency. CCNB continues to work with the traditional fishery, First Nations, coastal residents, and other environmental groups to challenge these regulatory changes and ensure there is significant oversight for pesticide and drug use on salmon farms.

Our Risk, Their Reward: Tour on Energy East

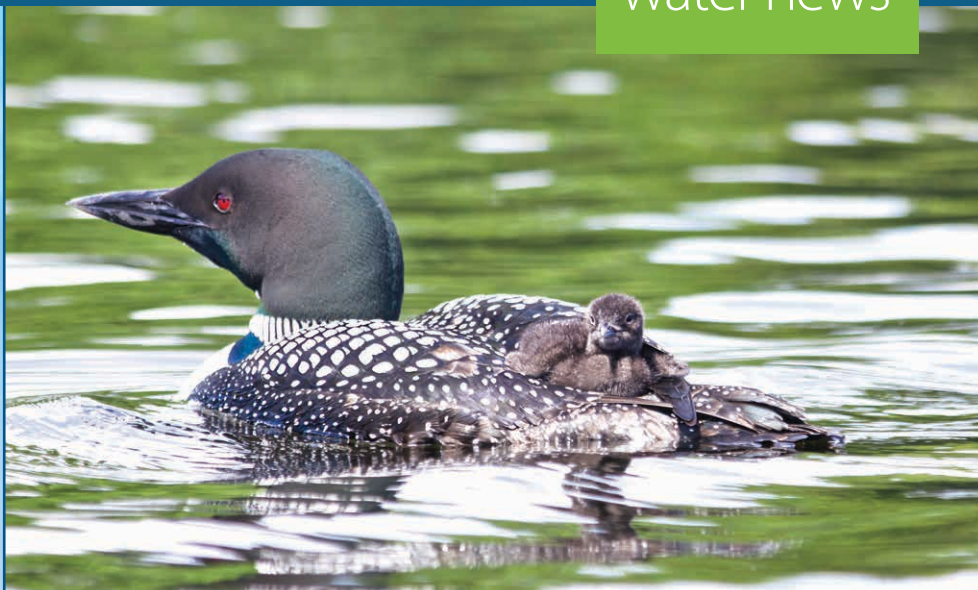


CCNB worked closely with the Council of Canadians to put together the "Our Risk, Their Reward" tour about the Energy East oil pipeline, which wound its way across parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia late in 2014. We helped line up local speakers for the Digby and Saint John events and lent our very own Fundy Baykeeper, Matthew Abbott, for the gatherings in Fredericton and Edmundston. Speakers on the tour also met with First Nations, affected landowners, fishers, local councils, and citizen groups.

The first half of the tour featured Cherri Foytlin from Louisiana discussing the health and ecosystem impacts of dispersant use after the British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. The second half featured Ben Gotschall, Energy Director for Bold Nebraska, discussing the experience of landowners on the route of the Keystone XL pipeline as well as important alliances they have formed, such as the Cowboy Indian Alliance.

People in communities across Eastern Canada and the Maritimes rallied in support of their water, whales, and a clean climate future during the Our Risk, Their Reward tour, which was organized late last year by the Council of Canadians with support and participation from groups like the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.





What a Win for Water

Premier Brian Gallant has earned his place in history as one of the first leaders in North America to stand up firmly for clean air and water by halting the controversial practice of hydraulic fracturing across the province.

Exactly one week before Christmas Day, Gallant announced to a room of reporters and invited guests in Fredericton that his government would honour its promise to impose a moratorium on fracking, prohibiting the unconventional method of fossil fuel extraction.

The announcement was the perfect cap to an exciting and inspiring week for citizens who'd spent the last several years writing letters, hosting community meetings and making sure elected officials understood the risks posed to clean water and human health by shale gas development.

Just one day before Premier Gallant made his announcement, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's administration unveiled its

plans for a statewide fracking ban, deeming the preservation of clean water to be more important than developing the state's sizeable natural gas deposits. And only the day before that, Quebec's environmental protection agency released a report on the safety and environmental impact of shale gas development, prompting Premier Philippe Couillard to declare shale gas fracking would not happen in his province.

New Brunswick is now the fourth jurisdiction in Canada to introduce a moratorium on fracking, a significant and precedent-setting move for a province facing heavy pressure from the fossil fuel lobby.

"It's nothing short of inspiring to see our premier standing alongside other strong leaders with the courage to protect clean water," says Stephanie Merrill, Freshwater Protection Program coordinator for the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

"I don't think I've ever been so proud to

be from this province. It's a wonderful win for us all, but especially for our water."

Merrill shared similar comments with reporters immediately after the moratorium was announced on Dec. 18. It was the interview she'd been waiting to give for nearly five years, ever since the executive director at CCNB told her back in 2010 that she may want to look into something called hydraulic fracturing, noting it "might become a thing here."

And how.

Merrill spent the next two years learning everything she could about the process of fracking and its health and environmental impacts, visiting Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and north east British Columbia to see gas fields and talk to affected community members. Fuelled by support from Conservation Council members and donors, she organized meetings in communities across the province, presenting her research so that concerned New Brunswickers could draw their own conclusions about the practice.

And they did. After just one year of campaigning, upwards of 40 community groups had emerged to protect water and oppose fracking, forming in large part due to the early efforts of Merrill and her colleagues at the Conservation Council.

After another year of hard, on-the-ground campaigning, a full-blown alliance was formed between the dozens of community groups across New Brunswick, a coalition that would grow into one of the largest and most diverse groups in the province's recent history, involving public support from First Nations, doctors, scientists, landowners, labour unions, municipal politicians, farmers, fishers, members of the clergy, and more.

From there, the role of the Conservation Council and Merrill's work shifted toward offering more guidance and support, letting grassroots organizers and citizens lead the charge moving forward.

Continued on page 10...



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2010

David Coon, former director at CCNB, tells Stephanie that she may want to look into something called hydraulic fracturing, noting it "might become a thing here."

2011

Upwards of 40 community groups emerge to protect water and oppose fracking. The New Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance is formed.

2012

A report released from New Brunswick's Chief Medical Officer of Health questions the health risks of fracking.

2013

The shale gas debate in New Brunswick gains national attention as opposition to the activity spreads across the province.

2014

Victory! Premier Brian Gallant announces moratorium on hydraulic fracturing

2015

Turning the page toward a green energy future in New Brunswick.



Fall colours on the Nashwaak River in New Brunswick. The province's Department of Environment had all the required documentation to classify the Nashwaak by no later than 2003 – but classification never came.

Story by Jon MacNeill

New Brunswick Rivers: Left out of the Loop

During the height of fishing season last year, as anglers lured Atlantic salmon on the world-famous Miramichi River and kids navigated through thickets to seek out their favourite summer swimming holes, a report came out casting a stark and sobering reality for the rivers so enjoyed in this province.

On Aug. 15, the New Brunswick Ombudsman, an independent authority of the provincial legislature, released the details of his investigation into the Department of Environment's handling of its Water Classification Program.

The first in Canada to take a proactive, watershed-based approach to river protection when it was introduced in 2002, the Ombudsman determined the classification program was, in effect, nothing more than an illusion, giving New

Brunswickers a woefully false impression about the safety of their rivers for more than a decade.

In the 12 years since it was established, not a single waterway has been protected under the classification system, the program instead plagued by bureaucratic confusion, lacklustre political will, and misuse of power from the elected officials charged with overseeing it.

"Like a smoke detector without batteries," wrote provincial Ombudsman Charles Murray in his report, "(the regulation) appears to address and remedy a problem when in reality it does nothing of the sort."

The classification program, concluded Murray, "exists primarily as a mirage, misleading observers to their detriment."

That's certainly a far cry from what was expected by conservationists and

departmental officials alike when the program was first unveiled.

The *Water Classification Program* was brought forth under Regulation 2002-13 as a progressive attempt to set water quality standards for rivers in New Brunswick.

The regulation allows community-based organizations to collect water samples, analyze water quality, and set goals to maintain or improve the water quality of rivers.

It was the final piece of a progressive regulatory regime put in place by the provincial government, complementing the *Wellfield Protected Areas Designation* (passed in 2000) and the *Watershed Protected Areas Designation* (enacted in 2001).

Over time, the department received 19 separate proposals for classification from groups across the province.

Among them was an application from the *Nashwaak Watershed Association*, which had been exceptionally proactive on the file, having secured funding from government to conduct water quality tests before the regulation had even been passed.

In his report, the Ombudsman noted the department had all the necessary documentation required to classify the Nashwaak by no later than 2003.

What followed were years of correspondence between the department and the *Nashwaak Watershed Association*, during which officials described the river and other provincial

Continued on page 10...



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What a Win for Water, continued...

"This moratorium would not have been possible if the people in communities all over the province hadn't taken ownership of the movement the way they did," Merrill says.

"It took big courage and commitment from a lot of people, and the support of thousands more."

Jim Emberger, who became spokesperson for the New Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance, says the level of grassroots involvement was unprecedented for the province.

"You'd talk to the 90-year-old men from the community who said they'd never seen anything like it before," Emberger says. "We had literally hundreds of people show up at our community meetings, and that has never happened before or since. The reaction was, really, I think, overwhelming."

New York's decision to ban fracking followed a two-year health study that was requested by state environmental officials and involved 4,500-staff-hours of research and reviews.

Like in New Brunswick, the question of whether to allow the activity was one of the most divisive public policy debates the state had seen in years, with proponents aggressively touting development as the engine needed to revive economically-depressed communities.

Given this backdrop, certain media outlets called Governor Cuomo's move "the ban heard around the world," noting it marked the first time a state with sizeable, proven gas deposits chose clean water and human health over industry lobbying, and demonstrated the type of leadership needed from government in the face of climate change.

The State's fracking study cited health risks as the main justification for the ban, echoing similar concerns raised in a report

by New Brunswick's Chief Medical Officer of Health in 2012.

Talking to reporters after the Dec. 17 announcement, Cuomo said, "I've never had anyone say to me, 'I believe fracking is great.'"

Howard Zucker, the governor's acting health commissioner, offered even more powerful comments: "Would I live in a community with (fracking) based on the facts that I have now? Would I let my child play in a school field nearby? After looking at the plethora of reports behind me ... my answer is no."

The moratorium here in New Brunswick will be imposed through an amendment to the *Oil and Natural Gas Act*. It can't be lifted until further information is

gathered and five conditions are met. Most notably, those conditions include the requirement of a social license and an obligation to consult First Nations.

But Merrill isn't

sweating the prospect of the moratorium being lifted.

"With this moratorium, our government is signalling a shift toward smarter environmental policy and toward the creation of sustainable, green jobs within a clean energy future," she says.

"This gives us the time we need to move on from the fracking debate, to begin the positive discussion on how we develop clean energy jobs right here in New Brunswick, today."



Feedback or questions? Contact Stephanie Merrill, Freshwater Protection Director at stephanie.merrill@conservationcouncil.ca

Rivers, continued from page 9...

watercourses as being "provisionally" classified, giving the impression that full classification was just around the corner.

Frustrated by the lack of movement on the program, the Nashwaak association and its supporters, including the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, filed a complaint to the office of the Ombudsman in February 2013, spearheading Mr. Murray's investigation.

"I think New Brunswickers were blindsided and appalled to learn our rivers were not being protected," says Stephanie Merrill, Freshwater Protection Program Coordinator for the Conservation Council.

"And we should be. It's a shame that in a province like New Brunswick, where so much of our culture, heritage and recreation is based around our rivers, that our government has lagged so long to give rivers the protection New Brunswickers want for them."

In a recent interview with the Conservation Council, the Ombudsman said the most troubling finding from his investigation was simply that government gave citizens a false impression for so many years that watercourses were being protected.

"That speaks to a really fundamental failure," Mr. Murray said. "It can't really be a larger failure than that."

His report offered some explanations - citing confusion within the Department of Environment over the legal authority of the regulation, and the troubling misuse of ministerial discretion by successive ministers to avoid approving the applications - but above all else, Murray says a lack of focused political will is primarily to blame.

But therein lies the hope for New Brunswick's waterways moving forward.

The province is under new leadership after Liberal Premier Brian Gallant won office in September. During the election campaign, his party pledged to ensure the health of our rivers and drinking water.

What better opportunity, says Murray, than moving swiftly to approve the 19 rivers submitted under the Water Classification Program?

"Why not be proactive and make yourself the champion of that change?" Murray says of the new provincial government.

"To me, this is an opportunity for the Minister of Environment to demonstrate competence, good faith, and to rebuild some bridges of trust between the department and the communities."

With any luck, by the time New Brunswickers set out with their fishing rods or swimming suits to indulge in our waterways this coming summer, they'll do so with the full confidence - and proof - that regulations are in effect to ensure rivers will remain healthy for generations to come.

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We sat down with Brian Kenny recently to give our members a chance to get to know their new Minister of Environment.

Brian Kenny, Minister of Environment and Local Government

Brian Kenny sits down with CCNB

Q. Growing up, what was your favourite place to visit in the outdoors?

My family had a small camp on the Nepisiguit River and we were always swimming in the river, always hiking. I grew up with four brothers and we spent a lot of time going to the camp and that is something I'll always remember. We also lived on Middle River in Bathurst and we used to go out and skip rocks and catch frogs and fish and so on. We were never in the house, we were always outdoors.

Q. What are your favourite activities in nature?

I really enjoy the wilderness, just getting out in the fresh air. I've climbed Mount Carleton and I've done a bit of fishing, here and around the world. I've had the chance to meet some amazing people just going out, sitting in a canoe, looking for trout or salmon. That's a hobby I'm lucky enough to share with a couple friends, so we get out on the Restigouche, the Matapedia or the Miramichi River whenever we get the chance. That's one beauty of New Brunswick that I think people don't realize, just how much beauty we have here. We kind of take it for granted.

Q. What's your biggest catch?

I've hooked a couple of salmon and that got me hooked, no pun intended. Conservation is quite important and I support and applaud the efforts of the respective Salmon associations and river groups. I've hooked one on the Restigouche, on the Miramichi, I've never hooked one on the Nepisiguit, but there are some nice salmon there.

Q. What is your management style when it comes to working with groups such as the Conservation Council of New Brunswick?

I think face-to-face meetings are very good. I met (CCNB executive director) Lois (Corbett) the other day. Whether they're opponents or proponents, I take the political side out of it because I think it's important to have an open dialogue. Whether you agree or disagree, you've got to be open to what people have to say. That's my policy: let's listen to what people have to say and have that dialogue.

Q. Tell us something that might surprise our members to learn about you.

I play music in a band and have played for 30 years now. It's just a local cover band, we've got a few originals but we've been playing in northern New Brunswick since 1985. I play guitar. The name of the group is *Wild Pitch*. I'm friends with a fellow who has *The Fishing Musicians* television show so we've played on a number of episodes around the world. We've opened up for all kinds of great bands: Nazareth, April Wine, Kim Mitchell, The Stampeders, and probably a dozen more. We were just playing at Dolan's Pub the other night. We just like to have fun. I'm not the best guitar player in the world but I know a few chords.



Interviewed by Jon MacNeill, contact Jon at jon.macneill@conservationcouncil.ca

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Life on St. John Street

Figuratively speaking, David Coon has covered a lot of ground since he first moved to 180 St. John Street in Fredericton to work for the Conservation Council. In literal terms, though, he hasn't travelled much distance at all.

"For so many years I worked at 180 St. John, and now I'm just down the street a couple blocks, to 96 St. John, at the Legislature," David says.

"I kind of like that. I think it's pretty cool." David settled into his new workplace last fall after making history as the first Green Party candidate ever elected to the New Brunswick legislature.

Running on a platform that promoted the growth of a green economy, the former executive director of the Conservation Council won a competitive four-way race in the Fredericton South riding, indicating a growing desire for new voices in the legislative assembly.

We caught up with David early in the New Year to talk about some of the ideas he'll be bringing forward as an MLA.

After all, the biologist and environmental organizer has a good deal of experience getting things done.

As policy director for CCNB, David spearheaded the effort to get safe drinking water legislation passed in New Brunswick, earning a major victory when the *Clean Water Act* came through in 1989.

Another big win came on the topic of climate change. In the late 90s, facing a backdrop of almost complete inaction on the issue across North America, David and his colleagues at CCNB convinced the provincial government to get climate action on the radar of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Association.

The government of the day agreed, resulting in a climate summit hosted in New Brunswick for the association's six member states and five provinces, and a climate action plan for the region that included targets and guidelines for achieving them.

Now as an MLA, David says he's focused on moving New Brunswick further toward a clean, productive and sustainable economy.

He plans to introduce a local food security act when the legislature reopens later this year, aimed at building the provincial food system and bolstering small- and medium-scale agriculture, manufacturing and food processing.

He's also planning a renewable energy bill to push the adoption of clean power, and wants to see strong energy efficiency measures written into the building code, therefore driving a green building sector in the province.

Having launched the Conservation Council's *Forest Conservation program*, David wants to see a major shift in the way we use our public forest, managing the resource sustainably while creating more jobs and a greater diversity of jobs from the sector.

Other priorities include democratic reform, with David already proposing to lower the legal voting age to 16, and healthcare reform, shifting to a focus on preventative care and taking measures to improve mental health services, particularly for young people.

"I think there is a real appetite for doing things differently," David says. "People are seeing the need to move forward, so for me, that's encouraging, it's hopeful, and it's going to happen."

Interviewed by Jon MacNeill, contact Jon at jon.macneill@conservationcouncil.ca