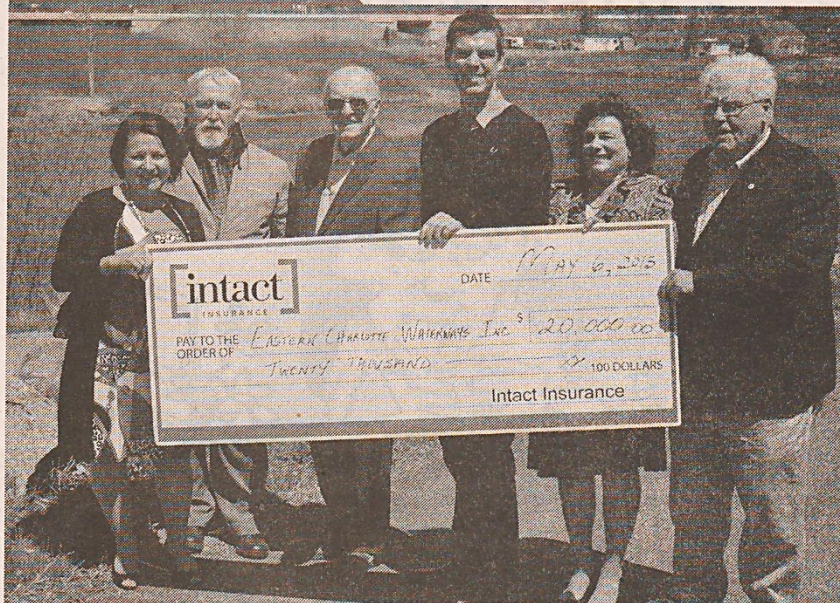


ENVIRONMENT



Barb Rayner/Courier

Intact Insurance, through its Intact Foundation, has donated \$20,000 towards a climate change adaptation project in Charlotte County. Pictured (from left) are regional branch manager of Intact Debbie Cyr, St. George Mayor Danny Henry, Gary Groom owner of Groom Insurance, executive director of Eastern Charlotte Waterways Donald Killorn, Intact sales and business consultant Lynda Murray and chair of the St. Croix Estuary Project Allan Gillmor.

## Local environmental groups receive \$20,000 for climate change project

Barb Rayner

ST. GEORGE

Eastern Charlotte Waterways (ECW) and the St. Croix Estuary Project (SCEP) have received \$20,000 to work on a climate change adaptation project in the county.

Regional branch manager of Intact Debbie Cyr and sales and business development consultant Lynda Murray were in St. George Monday for a formal presentation of \$20,000 to the project.

Donald Killhorn, executive director of ECW, who made a presentation to town council here in January about the project, explained that all five municipalities have agreed to support the initiative with citizen-based working groups so now they are trying to put the funding together.

He estimates the total cost of the project will be between \$110,000 and \$120,000 and said SCEP has already identified \$32,000 through the Atlantic Ecosystems Initiative.

The two organizations are working together to try to assist the municipalities to prepare for the effects of climate change. St. George has already witnessed an extreme weather event with the floods of 2010 which were the second largest floods recorded in the area since European settlers arrived.

"Each community will have a working group and these people, under our leadership, will be given expertise about climate change and what it will look like for their community and will be asked to identify vulnerabilities.

"The total budget is around \$125,000 but if we don't get all that we will find a way to make it happen. We have about half of what we need. We need to have money in place by the beginning of July and it will be spent before the end of April (2014)".

The biggest expense for the project, said Killhorn, will be LiDAR (aerial light detection and ranging) which will be used to identify low lying areas to help understand the vulnerabilities in the communities in Charlotte County. Once the data has been collected, he said, it will have to be modelled and these two aspects of the project will be the biggest expense.

"The working groups will be made up of volunteers and part of the support we received from the municipalities was that they will provide us with meeting space."

*"Climate change adaptation is something that is still in its infancy but we feel this is something we can begin with and start to prepare our communities for what is going to be an ongoing challenge."*

Donald Killorn

Killorn said the plan is to bring in a climatologist to explain what climate change is going to entail then the modelled data will be presented to the municipalities who, in turn, can identify the areas which are going to be facing challenges.

"The climatologist will teach the working group about climate change and the data modeller will turn it (data) into something that can be understood by the people in the working group.

"This is a process that has been developed and used across Canada. Climate change adaptation is something that is still in its infancy but we feel this is something we can begin with

and start to prepare our communities for what is going to be an ongoing challenge."

Municipalities were asked to organize a working group, assist with the provision of background information and provide a venue as well as administrative support for working group meetings.

The results of various provincial surveys show that most New Brunswick municipalities feel that climate change already is, or will soon be, an issue for them and the overall lack of climate change adaptation planning in the province is felt to be directly related to a lack of resources at the municipal level.

Through this project, ECW and SCEP will assist municipalities throughout Charlotte County by providing the relevant tools, information and contracted expertise, to help facilitate community understanding of climate change, its impacts and ensure that local communities are increasingly resilient to environmental change.

Identifying vulnerabilities provides communities with the opportunity to plan to avoid or minimize the negative consequences of hazards (disasters).

The working group will generate a vulnerability assessment and recommendations to be utilized in adaptation planning for their respective municipal councils.

The maps produced during the vulnerability process will help communities become better informed about the hazards in question, better target investment in proactive measures and oversee new development as well as refurbishments and upgrades to existing infrastructure.