

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

# BUSINESS News

## SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

# ECW working to promote community well-being

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BLACKS HARBOUR

Incorporated as a not-for-profit entity in 1993, Eastern Charlotte Waterways (ECW) continues to promote community well-being through sound environmental health.

Executive director Donald Killorn gave a brief overview of the organization at a recent St. George Council meeting. The organization's goals are accomplished by facilitating projects that integrate common social, economic and environmental concerns.

ECW's mission is to encourage community awareness regarding the local environment, to promote sustainable management of natural resources and to provide a means for citizens, municipalities and industry to maintain a viable local economy.

Sources of revenue for ECW include grants from both the federal and provincial governments, foundations and corporations for education and outreach initiatives as well as research and development projects and laboratory contracts from both government and industry.

Killorn said ECW is really a tool the community can use and the organization is in a position to access funding through the government and private foundations. If there is an environmental project council is interested in, he said, ECW can work with them to make it a reality.

ECW's board of directors includes four executive members and a member-at-large who advise the executive director on a regular basis concerning the affairs of the organization. The larger board represents various interests of the area in guiding the di-

rection of the organization.

The scope of activities covered by ECW includes integrated watershed assessment, coastal zone management, sustainable development, facilitation for participatory processes in environmental management issues and education.

Last autumn, ECW, in partnership with the Atlantic Ecosystems Initiative, researched contaminant sources in Charlotte County's coastal areas.

In an effort to improve the health of historically poor quality shellfish habitat, ECW staff monitored water quality after heavy rain, conducted water quality monitoring in upstream locations and surveyed the shorelines for sources of contamination. The goal of this project is to improve accessibility to closed harvest areas for Charlotte County's clam harvesters.

ECW is also involved in a research and development project to try and develop a process to naturally decontaminate clams found in closed harvest areas without the use of an expensive land-based depuration facility.

ECW staff has deployed contaminated clams in a suspended system of containers near an area of high water quality close to Bliss Island and is monitoring their contamination level over a period of 30 days to determine if the process can produce a marketable clam product.

Last spring, ECW staff visited the spawning streams of the Lake Utopia rainbow smelt pair to conduct environmental monitoring. The rainbow smelt populations of Lake Utopia are unique, consisting of two behaviourally and genetically distinct types.

In order to protect them, ECW

visited five known spawning streams during the spawning season and evaluated water quality, water levels and other obstructions to fish passage.

They discovered that the streams have high water quality but water levels are unpredictable. This project was supported by the federal government's Environmental Damages Fund and the Habitat Stewardship Program.

Last summer, for the second year, ECW implemented a lake water quality program in eastern Charlotte County thanks to support from the province's Environmental Trust Fund.

Water quality parameters and phytoplankton populations were monitored in Chamcook Lake, Lake Digdeguash and Lake Utopia. Results are being shared with all stakeholders including the Department of Environment and Local Government, the town of Saint Andrews, the Chamcook Lake Watershed Landowners' Association and the Lake Utopia Preservation Society.

ECW also continues to facilitate lake stewardship efforts in Charlotte County and across the province assisting in the formation of the Chamcook Watershed Landowners' Association and continuing to facilitate the planning of the New Brunswick Alliance of Lake Associations in preparation for a charter meeting in the spring.

As part of this effort, ECW will make a presentation at the second annual New Brunswick Lakes Conference Jan. 26 at the Riverside Resort and Conference Centre in Mactaquac.

To assist with these efforts, the federal government's Science Horizons Programs provided funding for a freshwater stewardship intern and

last August UNB graduate and Deer Island resident Julia Carpenter took on the position.

In 2005, ECW added a microbiology laboratory, equipped to test fresh and marine water for total coliform and E.coli bacteria, which provides services to the industries and residents of Charlotte County.

The primary client of the laboratory is Environment Canada. ECW provides sample collection and testing of coastal water samples in compliance with the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program and the Clam Harvesters of Charlotte County also utilize the laboratory for similar purposes.

Recently, in addition, the laboratory has added the testing of drinking water to its testing scope and launched the service in Charlotte County last fall.

All of ECW activities are based out of its office at 881 Main Street in Blacks Harbour - the former municipal building - which was purchased in 2004 with the assistance of ACOA.

ECW was the recipient of a Gulf of Maine Visionary Award in 1999 for working to bring stakeholders together to address environmental issues in the watersheds of the Gulf of Maine.

In 2001 the organization was invited by the premier's office to accompany the Canadian premiers and the prime minister on a Team Canada mission representing the environmental sector.

The following year, ECW received the NB Environmental Leadership Award - the first community organization to receive the award - for its work in reclaiming coastal areas for shellfish harvests.