

# These sights will never be on tourist brochures

## Environment

Items found illegally dumped range from rusted cars to shrimp still in the shell

DERWIN GOWAN  
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

ST. GEORGE – A pile of shrimp on top of the other debris in the woods north of St. George caught Rebecca Mersereau's attention.

It wasn't there when she checked two days before, the executive director of Eastern Charlotte Waterways said, surveying the illegal dump on private land along the Old St. Andrews Road.

"I'm really astounded by that, and they're not all out of their shells, either," she said, looking at the seafood delicacy. Some of the shell was shelled, some not.

Someone left the shrimp atop a growing pile of children's toys, furniture including couch and easy chair, and other unwanted belongings.

The load of earth the landowner dumped across the end of the woods road to the property doesn't stop people from accessing this illicit repository. Wheel tracks go over one side of the pile.

Mersereau and a reporter walked from the road to this spot on a tour of places that tourists will never find on a brochure of scenic vistas in Charlotte County.

Eastern Charlotte Waterways keeps a database of more than 50 illegal dumps and former dumps across the county. The Old St. Andrews Road site wasn't the worst of the handful Mersereau included in the afternoon tour.

That distinction goes to a dump barely off the Frost Road in the Second Falls area, not out of sight at all.

The decades of detritus here includes the rusted hulks of ancient automobiles, most of them sitting well down the bank.

On top are old roofing shingles, burnt lumber, cardboard, bedsprings, a television apparently burned then smashed, broken bathroom fixtures, unidentifiable



DERWIN GOWAN/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Eastern Charlotte Waterways executive director Rebecca Mersereau found this demolition debris in a gravel pit in plain sight, barely off the Old Saint John Road in the Lake Utopia area. It was just a short distance downhill from some very nice homes.

whatnot, and animal carcasses adding something to the aroma of sodden ashes, garbage and mud on a damp day.

The next day staff at the provincial Natural Resources Department looked at photographs of the site and sent conservation officers to inspect.

They identified deer paws probably left from last hunting season, along with the backbone and rib cage of something larger – possibly a moose or a farm animal.

"They are commencing an investigation at this site," department communications officer Anne Bull Monteith said in an interview.

The officers found no evidence of poaching, but dumping garbage at an unauthorized site can land someone in front of a judge.

Natural Resources runs a program with New Brunswick Crime Stoppers, offering rewards for anonymous tips that lead to the arrest of anyone for illegal activity on provincial Crown land including dumping.

Further along the tour Mersereau took the four-wheel-drive truck along a one-lane woods road in the Utopia area.

The road goes past a gravel pit with a small pile of debris at the bottom. The travesty on the Frost Road probably started something like this baby dump decades ago.

The pile includes an old tire, a cot spring and burned construction debris possibly from a home renovation project. A Tim Hortons coffee cup peaks out. Judging from the cans and bottles

round about, somebody likes Budweiser beer.

Headed back toward the main road the visitors noted a Christmas tree that someone tossed out.

"There's just sort of indiscriminate dumping along the way," Mersereau said.

Not far from here, toward Lake Utopia, Mersereau stopped at a gravel pit adjacent to the Old Saint John Road.

Someone dumped loads of demolition debris – splintered two-by-fours, broken bits of interior wallboard and the like. Trees block the view from nice homes not far up the hill.

"It really makes the owner of that pit responsible for cleaning that up, which is unfortunate," Mersereau said.

For the final stop on the afternoon

dump tour, Mersereau chose a success on the McCarthy Road in Pocologan.

Eastern Charlotte Waterways got government funding for a program against illegal dumping from 2004 to 2007. The program identified 60 sites and cleaned up 16. ECW cleaned up three of the sites, Natural Resources the rest.

An audit in January 2009, showed some of these sites still in use and a few new sites. ECW tries to include them all – old, new, cleaned up – in its database.

As the Old St. Andrews Road site demonstrated, blocking access does not stop people from using an established dumpsite. Sometimes people will leave garbage at the gate blocking the road to an accustomed place to leave things, Mersereau said.

Putting up a No Dumping sign without cleaning a site does not help much either, Mersereau said.

**I BELIEVE THERE WERE QUITE A FEW (DUMPS) CLEANED UP BY PRIVATE OPERATORS, WHICH IS QUITE AN EXPENSE."**

REBECCA MERSEREAU

"When you make the effort to actually try to clean up, people seem to notice," Mersereau said. "Cleaning them up is not a lost effort. It probably goes a long way towards educating people on keeping premises clean."

At the McCarthy Road site a big green sign featuring the mascot SID ("Stop Illegal Dumping") the moose informs passersby that their tax dollars cleaned up this former dump.

"I believe there were quite a few (dumps) cleaned up by private operators, which is quite an expense," Mersereau said.

She praised camp owners who cleaned up a dump at Red Rock in northern Charlotte County.

Education can change ingrained attitudes, Mersereau said, but illegal dumping persists.