

Feds spend \$20,000 to plant willows along river

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ST. GEORGE • The federal government will contribute \$20,000 toward restoring the banks of the Magaguadavic River in the Second Falls area.

The money will go toward planting 6,000 native willow trees in an attempt to undo damage over the years caused by residential development, agriculture and industry, Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea announced in a news conference Friday afternoon, on the bandstand at the St. George Day Adventure Centre.

Summer students working for Eastern Charlotte Waterways have already planted about half the trees, donated by J.D. Irving, Limited from its Sussex facility.

High School students from Charlotte County will plant many of the rest this fall as part of an environmental sciences module, Eastern Charlotte Waterways executive director Donald Killorn explained.

He said in an interview following the official announcement that restoring the riparian zone to its natural state will help the river handle flooding that has become more common since 2010.

The group chose willow trees because their roots grow fast, and are water tolerant, Killorn said. He expects to plant more trees after doing physical restoration in the river and along the banks.

"Whatever it takes, whether it's rock or whether it's bioengineering, there's all sorts of different techniques we can use to enhance the riparian zones, and then we'll go behind those enhancements and plant more trees," he said.

The Bonny River area below Second Falls includes fields cleared to the river where cattle grazed years ago, Killorn said.

There are blueberry and cranberry operations. Some owners who developed down to the river are losing land, he said.

The power dam at St. George affects the river as far up as Second Falls, he said.

Eastern Charlotte Waterways is working with all of these landowners, he said.

The \$20,000 that Shea announced will go toward \$40,000 worth of work this year counting cash and in-kind contributions, Killorn said.

Shea announced this money under a plan that Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced this year in New Maryland.

Under this program, the federal government intends to spend \$25 million over five years to protect

recreational fisheries habitat across the country, she explained.

Last year, the federal government contributed \$6 million under this program for 94 projects. This year, Ottawa will contribute another \$5.5 million for 128 projects, including the \$20,000 for the Magaguadavic. The deadline for applying for the third round of funding, to be announced next year, was Friday.

Ottawa will partner with local groups such as Eastern Charlotte Waterways to leverage more money, Shea said.

"Recreational fishing is actually worth a lot to the economy. Angling alone generates about \$8.3 billion in the Canadian economy.

"That is very, very, very significant, and there are more than 3.3 million anglers that participate in recreational activities every year," Shea said.

Non-resident anglers make more than two million fishing trips a year to Canada, she said.

Charlotte-The Isles MLA, Rick Doucet, members of St. George town council, employees of the provincial Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries Department and others attended the event.

The minister made this announcement during a busy three days in the New Brunswick Southwest federal riding with MP John Williamson acting as tour guide.

On Thursday, they went to Grand Manan to cut the ribbon to officially open improved harbour facilities at Seal Cove. They also met with the Grand Manan Fishermen's Association.

On Friday morning, they spent 90 minutes at Connors Bros., the only remaining sardine cannery in North America, at Blacks Harbour. Following the announcement in St. George they had meetings set up with the Fundy North Fishermen's Association and Save Passamaquoddy Bay, a group opposed to plans to develop a liquefied natural gas terminal at Robbinston, Maine.

They planned to go to Tracy on Saturday.

As MP for Egmont on Prince Edward Island, Shea represents fishing families in Parliament, Williamson said.

"Protecting recreational fisheries habitat is vital to ensuring that this proud Canadian tradition continues not only in our area but right across the country," Williamson said.

They belong to different political parties but Shea – who was a Doucet before she was married – acknowledged the presence of Doucet, a former provincial Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries minister.



Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea, front right, announced in St. George on Friday that the federal government will contribute \$20,000 to Eastern Charlotte Waterways to plant trees to restore the Magaguadavic River bank. Others who attended the announcement included, back, left to right, ECW board member Brian Glebe, ECW environmental technician Ryan Martin, ECW executive-director Donald Killorn, New Brunswick Southwest MP John Williamson, and ECW summer students Alex Wilkins and Brian Ritchie; and, front, left to right, summer students Katelyn Richard and Darian Hoyt.

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