



*Avalon Peninsula
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council*



*Annual Activity
Report 2007-08*

Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Avalon Peninsula Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2007-08 fiscal year. On behalf of the Council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results achieved.

During this past year, the Council has refined its vision document to reflect feedback from citizens and stakeholders. With the support of the regional planners, we have broadened the community engagement process to include a wider group of citizens and stakeholders in order to ensure that our work is truly regional in nature. The Council has refined its perspectives and thoughts on the priority areas and the Council's activity plan for 2008-11.

The Avalon Peninsula Regional Council has reached consensus on a process for submitting advice around its priorities to the provincial government so that academia, government and community perspectives can be harnessed to maximize the benefits and opportunities for the region in the future.

Sincerely,



Kerry Murray
Chair
Avalon Peninsula Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

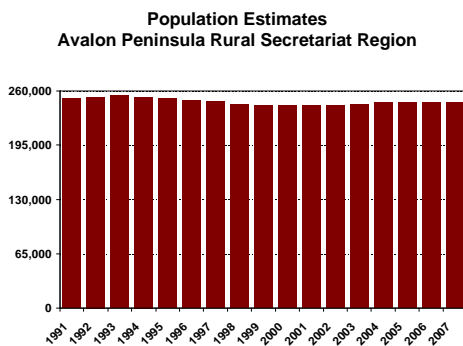
The Avalon Peninsula Rural Secretariat region encompasses the Northeast Avalon including Bell Island, Conception Bay South, Conception Bay North, Trinity Bay South and the areas of Placentia, the Cape Shore, St. Mary's Bay and the Southern Shore.

The region is the second smallest Rural Secretariat region geographically and the largest region demographically. The majority of the population, approximately 71%, live in towns with more than 5,000 people – St. John's, Mount Pearl, Conception Bay South, Paradise, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, Torbay, and Bay Roberts. The Avalon has relatively few people living in small towns and this presents a unique opportunity within the Rural Secretariat to advance both urban and rural needs within the region.

The Avalon Peninsula region was reported as having a population of about 246,400 in 2007. In addition to the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area (population of about 183,500 in 2006), the largest towns and main regional service centres in the region include Carbonear and Harbour Grace (population of about 7,800 combined), Bay Roberts (about 5,400) and Placentia (about 3,900).

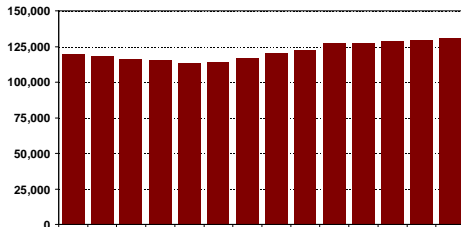


Additional regional demographic information can be found in *Regional Demographic Profiles: Newfoundland and Labrador* (www.economics.gov.nl.ca/population/regionaldemographicprofiles.asp).

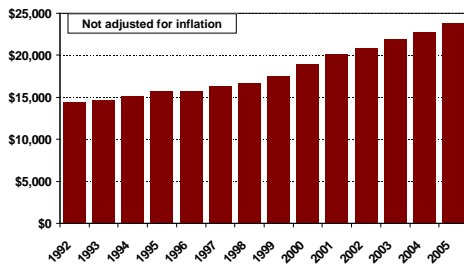


The region's labour market has been growing over the past 15 years. The number of persons employed (including self-employed) was 130,700 in 2005 compared with an average of about 117,000 between 1992 and 1999.

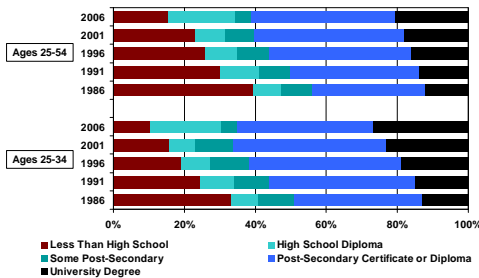
**Employed and Self-Employed
Avalon Peninsula Rural Secretariat Region**



**Per Income per Capita
Avalon Peninsula Rural Secretariat Region**



**Educational Attainment
Avalon Peninsula Rural Secretariat Region**



While employment has remained stable, incomes have increased. Per capita income in the region in 2005 was \$23,800. This is an increase of about 18% from 2001 and 51% from 1996.

Over this period, incomes have also been impacted by inflation and by changes to personal tax rates. Adjusting for these factors, after-inflation, after-tax personal income per capita in 2005 was about 9% higher than 2001 and 29% higher than 1996.

Formal educational attainment is increasing in the region. Among those of prime labour force age (ages 25-54), 50% had completed a college level program or university degree in 1991. By 2006, this rate had grown to 61%. Among younger workers (ages 25-34), the rate of post secondary completion grew from 56% to 65% over the same period.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.lmiworks.ca

2. Regional Council Overview

The Avalon Peninsula Regional Council is comprised of 13 members; six female and seven male. The Council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region. The Council met five times in 2007-08.

The Council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of the Council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat.

The Rural Secretariat also funds two regional planner positions in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the Council and facilitate the work of the Council. The planners for the Avalon Peninsula region are Jamilee Fitzpatrick and Ken Carter. Their regional offices are located in Placentia (Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development) and Carbonear (College of the North Atlantic Campus).

Regional Council members	Community
Anne Manuel	Torbay
Betty Moore	Clarke's Beach
Bride Power	Marysvale
Bruce Pearce	St. John's
Des Linehan	Placentia
Don Case	Salmon Cove
Jay McGrath	Branch
John Adams	Harbour Grace
Kerry Murray	Topsail
Maureen Sullivan	Calvert
Patricia Puddister	Bay Bulls
Paul Connors	Conception Bay South
Sheila Lee	Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay

**Additional members were appointed in September 2008. For an updated listing of council members please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp>.*

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- To review key regional economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.

- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. *Lines of Business*

The Council supports the Rural Secretariat's two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development.** The Rural Secretariat engages citizens and coordinates the development of partnerships to focus on sustainable regional development and provide direct consideration of regional issues in the development of public policy.
- **Regional Impact Awareness and Action.** The Rural Secretariat conducts research and analysis, and provides informed advice on opportunities and challenges in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

5. *Values*

The core values explain the character of the organization. The Council supports the Rural Secretariat's core values, listed as follows:

Collaboration	Each person is committed to working together effectively.
Creativity	Each person seeks and supports new ideas and approaches.
Empowerment	Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions.

Inclusion	Each person acknowledges others' views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own.
Learning Culture	Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn.
Transparency	Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles.
Trust	Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments.

6. *Primary Clients*

The primary clients of the Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the provincial government, among others.

The Council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. *Vision*

The Avalon Peninsula Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

Through its work, the Council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. *Mission*

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Council. It represents the key longer-term result that the Council will be striving towards as they move forward with their work. The priority focus areas support the strategic directions of the provincial government. The statement also identifies the indicators that will assist both the Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. The Council will report on its mission statement in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

The mission statement of the Avalon Peninsula Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat, as written in its 2007-08 Activity Plan, is as follows:

By 2011, the Avalon Peninsula Regional Council will have participated in annual forums and annual dialogue with Government and within regions that will show the value of two-way conversations between citizens and Government.

Based on its work in 2007-08, the Council modified its Mission Statement in its 2008-11 Activity Plan. The new Mission statement, while largely similar, focuses more broadly on community engagement processes. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

9. *Report on Performance*

In its 2007-08 Activity Plan the Council identified three goals. This section outlines each of these goals, its measure and indicators, and describes activities undertaken by the Council to advance its achievement.

The Council's goals, objectives, measures and indicators for future years are identified in its Activity Plan for 2008-11. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

The activities and performance of the Council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the provincial government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the Council's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various stakeholders at the regional level, and provided a new regional forum to discuss citizens' perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. The Council recognizes that these strategic directions are long term in nature and believes that its activities in 2008-09 and beyond will further support these directions.

GOAL 1: Vision

- 1. By March 31, 2008 the Avalon Peninsula Regional Council will have refined its long-term vision for the sustainable development of the region.**

Measure:

Refinement of long-term regional vision for sustainable development

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
Completion of a working document that is shared with regions and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft internal working document prepared in 2006-07.• Discussions were held at Avalon Council's five meetings in 2007-08 around the vision document• Revisions completed to reflect discussions• Vision presented to Minister Taylor and posted to the web• Vision shared with regional partners• A copy of the Avalon Peninsula's vision is available on the Rural Secretariat's website (www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp#2)

GOAL 2: Regional Priorities

2. By March 31, 2008 the Avalon Peninsula Regional Council will have clarified regional priorities that have been identified as key elements in attaining the vision.

Measure:

Clarification of identified regional priorities

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed information and discussion related to identified regional priorities • Initiation of the development of a framework to further guide discussion within the community and government to advance regional priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council, in partnership with the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, initiated the development of a conceptual framework by which it could develop regional priorities. • Council identified a draft set of priorities in 2006-07. These priorities are consistent with the conceptual framework noted above. • Further refinement of Council’s priorities via discussions around the Council table and feedback through the engagement process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “skills development” broadened to “labour supply and demand with a focus on youth” ➤ further work on the Council’s environment priority through engagement of the Harris Centre resulted in a move by the Council to a focus on “adaptation to climate change and land use planning” from a focus on “recycling” ➤ Council discussions of the infrastructure priority led to a focus on transportation and communication infrastructure needed to reach regional sustainability • Engagement of provincial government departments and MUN’s Harris Centre around priorities to gain a better understanding of the provincial government’s priorities and academic research findings and perspectives • These priorities are outlined in the Council’s 2008-11 plan (www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp)

GOAL 3: Citizen Engagement

3. By March 31, 2008 the citizen engagement process initiated in December 2006 is broadened to more citizens.

Measure:

Citizen engagement process is broadened

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of individuals or small groups within regions • Engagement of community groups, e.g., church groups, student councils, senior’s groups, etc. • Engagement of formal groups, e.g., health boards, school boards, economic development organizations, etc. • Engagement of mixed groups that include representation from community and formal groups, as well as individuals within regions who have participated in previous engagement sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The citizen engagement process was initiated in December 2006. Initial sessions held between December 2006 and March 2007 allowed for an orderly expansion of the process in 2007-08. • There were 14 community engagement sessions. In total, there were 65 participants. (It should be noted that some individuals may have attended more than one engagement session in 2006-07 and 2007-08.) • Sessions included a mix of individuals and community groups including municipalities, youth, seniors, private sector and economic development organizations • Sessions were run by Regional Planners with participation from Council members • Key results from the sessions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Increased citizens’ knowledge of the Rural Secretariat, the Regional Council, and the challenges facing the region, particularly demographic challenges ➢ Validation and refinement of the region’s vision ➢ Identification of differing expectations for the future across various age groups (e.g., youth and baby boomers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the citizen engagement process informs the vision document and key priorities of the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the sessions was used to refine the vision document and much of the discussion validated the Council’s discussions • The sessions were positive overall. Council members who participated were satisfied with the results

The Avalon Peninsula Regional Council is seeking to broaden public dialogue on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region. It aims to provide input and advice to the provincial government on these opportunities and challenges. This is a long term process that will require ongoing collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in the region. The Council feels that its performance in 2007-08 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. Council is providing an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and differing expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues. The Council feels that its achievements in 2007-08 will strengthen its performance in 2008-09.

10. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is all-encompassing and long-term in nature, the opportunities and challenges faced by the Council remain fairly similar from year to year. However, it is these opportunities and challenges that guide the Council members in their work and provide them with the drive to move their agenda forward over the course of the year.

Collaboration

Collaboration requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to work together for mutual gain. It requires citizens, stakeholders and interests to step out of their 'comfort zones' and to look at issues through multiple perspectives and lenses. While the Council is committed to regional collaboration, it is aware that this is a long term project.

Long-term thinking

Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the Council, is necessary if regional sustainability is to be achieved. Thinking long-term will be challenging for citizens, stakeholders and interests given that there are immediate issues to be addressed within the region.

Citizen Engagement

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens, stakeholders and interests throughout the region to inform public policy development. The success of this process will hinge on the ability of participants to listen to each other, and discuss issues in an open, informed and respectful manner. Continued citizen engagement is key in achieving its vision.

Vision Development

The vision statement for the Council is not intended to achieve a final form. It is intended to be an organic document that seeks to identify what the Council wants to achieve over the long term. As regional circumstances change over time, so too will regional priorities.

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

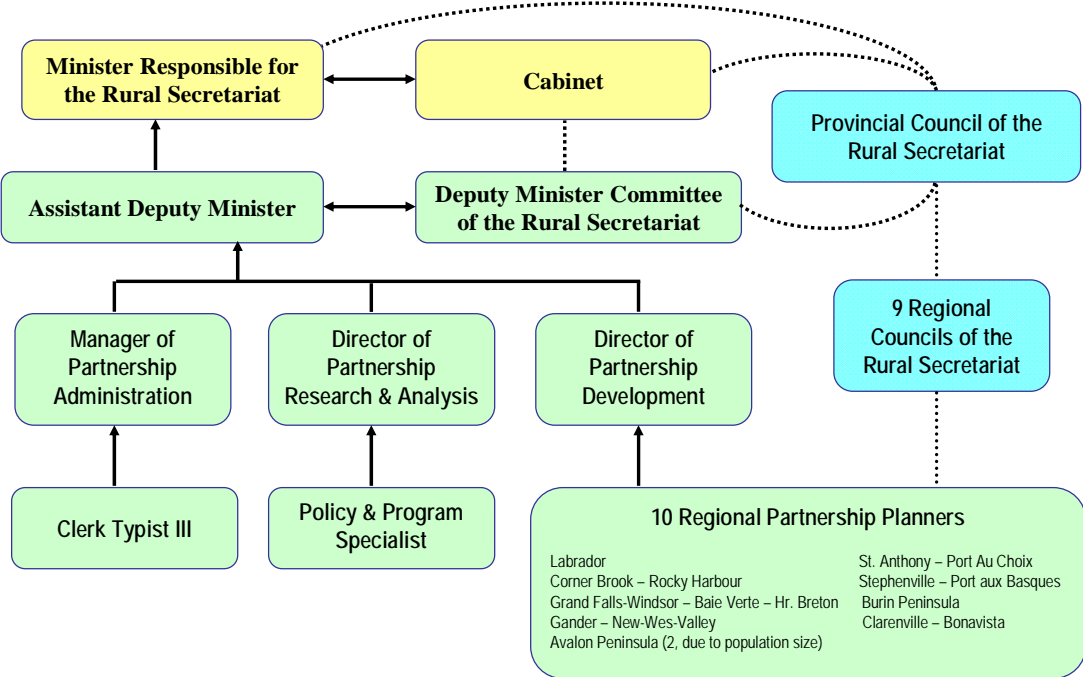
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy.

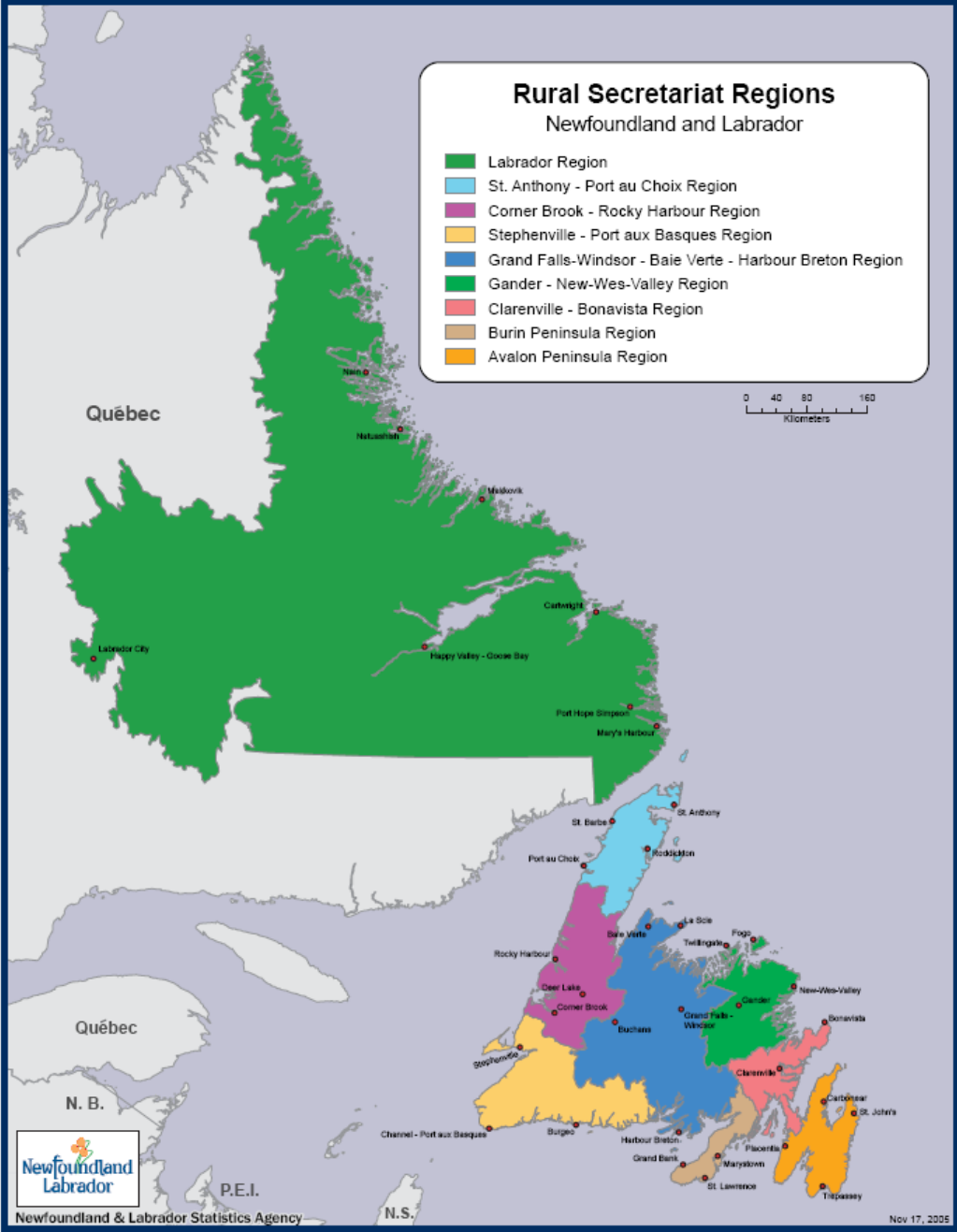
Picture Plant on the Avalon Peninsula



Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C



Appendix D

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional development.
- Act as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic regions and communities.
- Ensure that regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- Review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- Identify and advise government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- Advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- Meet twice annually with the provincial Cabinet and deputy ministers to advance regional development priorities.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

Photo Credit:



Cape Race
Photo Compliments of Irish Loop Dev Board



Dunville
Photo Compliments of Avalon Gateway



Bowring Park. St. John's
Photo Compliments of Mary Snow



Picture Plant – Avalon Peninsula
Photo Compliments of Mary Snow



The Tide Park, Harbour Main
Photo Compliments of Mary Snow



Rural Secretariat

Jamilee Fitzpatrick
Regional Partnership Planner - Avalon Peninsula
1116-1120 Main Street, P.O. Box 61
Dunville, NL A0B 1S0
(w) 227-1322
(c) 227-4426
(f) 227-1602
Email: jamileefitzpatrick@gov.nl.ca

Ken Carter
Regional Partnership Planner - Avalon Peninsula
c/o College of the North Atlantic
Room 120, 4 Pike's Lane
Carbonear, NL A1Y 1A7
(w) 596-8923
(c) 680-3388
(f) 596-5187
E-mail: klcarter@gov.nl.ca