



**Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Annual Activity Report 2011-12**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As Chairpersons for the Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Regional Council, we hereby submit the activity report for the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, our signatures are indicative of the council's accountability for the results reported.

We consider that this Regional Council has had a successful year in establishing and delivering the goals for the region. We have managed to achieve our objective for this year as outlined in the 2011-14 Activity Plan and have submitted policy advice to the Provincial Government on areas which we believe are of importance to the region.

This year the Regional Council was also pleased to receive three new member appointments from across the region and looks forward to the on-going input and views from these and all our members as they work to advance regional sustainability.

With regard to policy advice; the council chose opportunities for synergies between fishery and tourism sectors as its area of focus from 2011-12, because of the potential benefits to sustainability which exist should these opportunities be developed. The council participated in several research projects related to this, and the policy advice highlighted the results of these projects and the need for collaboration and partnerships to overcome barriers and move forward potential opportunities.

In addition to this focus area, the council has also participated in relevant regional and provincial engagements and workshops, and has submitted additional advice to government regarding other issues of importance in our region.

We look forward to having further dialogue on many important issues over the coming year, and also to carrying out research and providing policy advice on our new focus area for 2012-13 which seeks to identify opportunities to increase regional access to health services.

Sincerely,



Don Downer and Colleen Kennedy
Co-Chairs, Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

The 2011 Census population for Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region was 45,549. This represents a decrease of 0.4 percent since 2006. Over the same period, the entire province experienced a population increase of 1.8 percent since 2006 (514,536 in 2011, up from 505,470).

The 2007 gross income for every man, woman, and child (gross personal income per capita) in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region was \$23,400. For the province, personal income per capita was \$24,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$15,600 for Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region in 2007. For the province it was \$16,400.

The 2007 self-reliance ratio for Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region was 77.1 percent. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers, the lower the self-reliance ratio. The provincial self-reliance ratio for 2007 was 79.4 percent.

In Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region, the employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those between 18 and 64 years of age was 76.5 percent. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 76.7 percent.

The number of individuals in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2010 was 4,415. The 1991 figure was 7,945.

Census 2006 reported that 25.1 percent of people 18 to 64 years of age in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region did not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province. About 74.9 percent of people aged 18 to 64 in the region had at least a High School diploma in 2006 compared to 74.9 percent in the province as a whole. In Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region about 12.4 percent of those people aged 18 to 64 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006 compared to 13.3 percent in the province as a whole.

A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2009-2010, 56 percent (+/-4.8 percent) of individuals age 12 and over in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status as excellent or very good. For the province, 60.1 percent (+/-1.6 percent) of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as excellent or very good; 60.2 percent (+/- 0.3 percent) rated their health status as very good.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural.

2. REGIONAL COUNCIL OVERVIEW

The Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council is comprised of nine members; five female and four male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including six members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The council met four times in 2011-12.

Regional Council members	Community
Bertha Brophy	Daniel's Harbour
Joan Cranston	Norris Point
Don Downer (Co-Chair)	Corner Brook
Joseph Loder	Summerside
Colleen Kennedy (Co-Chair)	Rocky Harbour
Cyril Kirby	Deer Lake
Arch Mitchell	Benoits Cove
Regina Rumbolt	Parsons Pond
Carla Wells	Corner Brook

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

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource for the council and facilitates the work of the council. The planner for the Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour region is Marion McCahon. The regional office is located within the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development Office in the Millbrook Mall, Corner Brook.

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.

3. MANDATE

The Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council's mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing a region.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity, etc.) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either a) advance b) negatively impact or c) need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five-year period.

- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about the economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To serve as a sounding board in their region for new or proposed initiatives.
- To select an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. LINES OF BUSINESS

The Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council supports the Rural Secretariat’s four lines of business:

Citizen-based policy advice: The Rural Secretariat supports nine citizen-based Regional Councils, and one stakeholder-based Provincial Council, to develop policy and decision-making advice for submission to government. Typically, councils, with the support of Rural Secretariat staff, hold public engagement sessions involving citizens and/or stakeholder group representatives, and conduct community-based research activities, to inform the development of advice documents.

Collaboration: The Rural Secretariat understands that collaboration is critical for sustainability in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The Rural Secretariat works to support existing rural collaborative processes such as partnerships. Other times they work to help convene new regional collaborative processes such as networks or alliances. The broad goal is to help build a strengthened ‘culture of collaboration’ in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Research: The Rural Secretariat collaborates with provincial partners on a number of formal research endeavors that help to improve understanding of the challenges facing, and opportunities available to, rural regions of this province. The Rural Secretariat also works directly with regional partners and councils on a host of community-based research initiatives – small regional-level data-gathering efforts that give those involved the information and knowledge they need to effectively advise the Provincial Government on regional and rural policy issues.

Public dialogue and engagement: In addition to supporting councils to conduct public engagement efforts, the Rural Secretariat is also available to assist other Provincial Government departments to design and deliver their own public engagement initiatives. The Rural Secretariat also periodically convenes special deliberative dialogue initiatives on themes deemed to be of particular importance to the rural sustainability of this province, often in partnership with rural stakeholder groups and other government departments.

5. VALUES

The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council are as follows:

Collaboration:	We are committed to building a culture of collaboration within Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond
Creativity/innovation:	We strive to transcend traditional ideas, rules, and patterns, and to work together to create new ideas, relationships, and approaches
Evidence-based decision making	We will make our decisions based on consideration of the best evidence and research available to us.
Inclusion:	We acknowledge difference and cherish the views and perspectives of all. We will take steps to ensure all have an opportunity to express their own views
Learning culture:	We accept that we have a lot to learn and relish the opportunity to learn more
Participation/engagement:	We believe citizen/stakeholder/community engagement is essential to the development of good public policy
Teamwork:	We provide support to one another, work co-operatively, respect differing views and strive to make our work environments safe and enjoyable
Honesty:	We are open and honest in all our dealings and maintain the highest integrity at all times
Excellence:	We strive for excellence, quality and the achievement of best practice.

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 also engages individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. VISION

The Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Vibrant rural regions and communities where collaborative organizations and engaged and informed citizens work closely with governments to advance rural sustainability.

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

8. MISSION

The Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Regional Council supports the mission of the Rural Secretariat:

By March 31, 2017, the Rural Secretariat will have worked with regional and departmental partners to improve the sustainability prospects of rural communities and regions.

The council supports this mission by engaging with our regional partners, stakeholders and relevant government departments to identify key policy issues and direction related to rural and regional sustainability. This advice is then communicated to the Provincial Government to assist with departmental decision-making related to these issues.

9. REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

In the 2011-2014 Activity Plan, council identified one objective; provide ongoing advice to the Provincial Government on issues that affect the region. This objective considers the council's mandate and financial resources as well as the Provincial Government's strategic directions (Appendix A). The identified measures and indicators will be used to monitor progress in delivery of the objective. The council will report on the same objective for each year in the 2011-14 planning cycle.

To ensure that the Regional Council is properly informed and adequately prepared in developing its advice to Government, it will make use of any one of a number of tools to assist in its work as it deems appropriate. In keeping with the Provincial Government's strategic directions (Appendix A) as applicable to the Rural Secretariat, these tools include, but are not limited to, research activities and collaboration which provide input into council's policy advice document submissions.

9.1 Issue: Provide Advice to Government

The Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Regional Council believes there are significant opportunities to strengthen connections between the fishery and tourism industries in the region and that these industries have a crucial role to play in advancing the long-term sustainability of rural communities. In particular, there are opportunities related to increasing market demand for local seafood and related culinary tourism, in addition to experiential tourism associated with the fishery. The council has chosen this topic to provide advice to the Provincial Government as it feels that these opportunities have the potential to create new economic benefits and enhanced sustainability for both sectors and to support government's strategic directions with regard to the fishing sector.

Objective: By March 31, 2012 council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government on issues that relate to regional sustainability.

Measure: Provided advice

Indicators	Accomplishments
Issue Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the council meetings held on June 23, 2011 and November 2, 2011 council debated various topics of regional priority and identified fishery-tourism opportunities and synergies as the issue it wished to provide advice on for 2011-2012.
Researched issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Council was a partner on the advisory group for research conducted by Memorial University on Fishery Tourism Synergies in the Bonne Bay area. This research was funded jointly by the Rural Secretariat and MITACs, a national not-for-profit research organization. The research was carried out in spring and summer of 2011 and involved a post-graduate student interning with fishery-tourism providers in the Bonne Bay area. The research encompassed a literature and jurisdictional scan, community and industry interviews and a survey on fish consumption by local residents. The lead researcher for this project presented the research findings to council at their meeting on March 9 and 10, 2012, along with the lead researcher on a supporting project which identified legislative and regulatory barriers to fishery-tourism synergies in the province.

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council also met and shared research information with other Regional Councils involved with providing advice related to the fishery. This meeting took place on December 12, 2011 in Corner Brook and involved the Gander- New-Wes-Valley and St Anthony - Port Au Choix Regional Councils.
Consensus developed on advice to Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council met on March 9 and 10, 2012 to discuss and gain consensus on the content of the advice letter. It was agreed that because of the complex nature of the issue that the advice letter should focus on highlighting the research results for the following projects : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examining the Foundation for Stronger Fishery-Tourism Synergies and Increased Local Seafood Consumption in the Bonne Bay area. 2. Navigating the Legislative Requirements for Fishery-Tourism Initiatives. • The letter would also encourage the relevant department to participate in an upcoming synergy session to discuss the issue and potential solutions in more detail.
Communicated advice to Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council submitted an advice letter (dated March 23, 2012) to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, advising them of the research findings and requesting them to consider collaborating with partners on moving forward fishery-tourism opportunities in the province. • The letter also invited the department to attend the upcoming synergy session (to be held in June 2012) to further discuss this issue and any actions required.

Discussion of Results:

In light of the above accomplishments, the council has been able to meet its annual objective regarding providing advice and information on improving opportunities for fishery-tourism synergies in the Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Region. This continues to be a priority for the council and they look forward to participating in the upcoming synergy session to discuss this priority further with policy-makers and sector representatives.

10. ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, five additional highlights and accomplishments are worthy of mention. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the work of the council.

- Regional Council members participated in the Community-Based Research Workshop, held in Corner Brook on February 22, 2012 which featured presentations by Canadian experts in community-based research. The workshop also identified regional opportunities for new research, many of which have the potential to be useful to the council in the preparation of future advice documents.
- Regional Council members met with Western Health staff on March 30, 2012 to carry out preparatory research for the council's 2012-13 advice topic on increasing regional access to health services.
- During the Regional Council Orientation Session, held on January 27 and 28, 2012, the council was engaged in deliberative dialogue to provide advice to Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL) on the provision of 911 services in the province.
- The Regional Council also provided an advice letter (dated March 26, 2012) to the Department of Advanced Education and Skills regarding the Job Creation Partnership (JCP) program. This letter proposed ways in which the JCP program could be improved through enhanced community consultation and engagement and stressed the importance of having regional input in funding application decision-making processes.
- Members of the Regional Council met with the St Anthony-Port au Choix Regional Council and the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council on December 12, 2011 to share research and policy advice information related to fishery projects.

11. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

As the nature of the work of the council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the council remain fairly similar from year to year. It feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

The council's mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to the Provincial Government. The opportunity for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

The council's mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and be a conduit for advice to government to advance efforts.

Regional communications

The council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to the Provincial Government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for it is to openly and positively communicate its mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for it, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as it identifies regional priorities, provides advice to government and fosters collaboration.

APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Strategic Directions

1. **Title:** Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

Outcome Statement: A sustainable rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

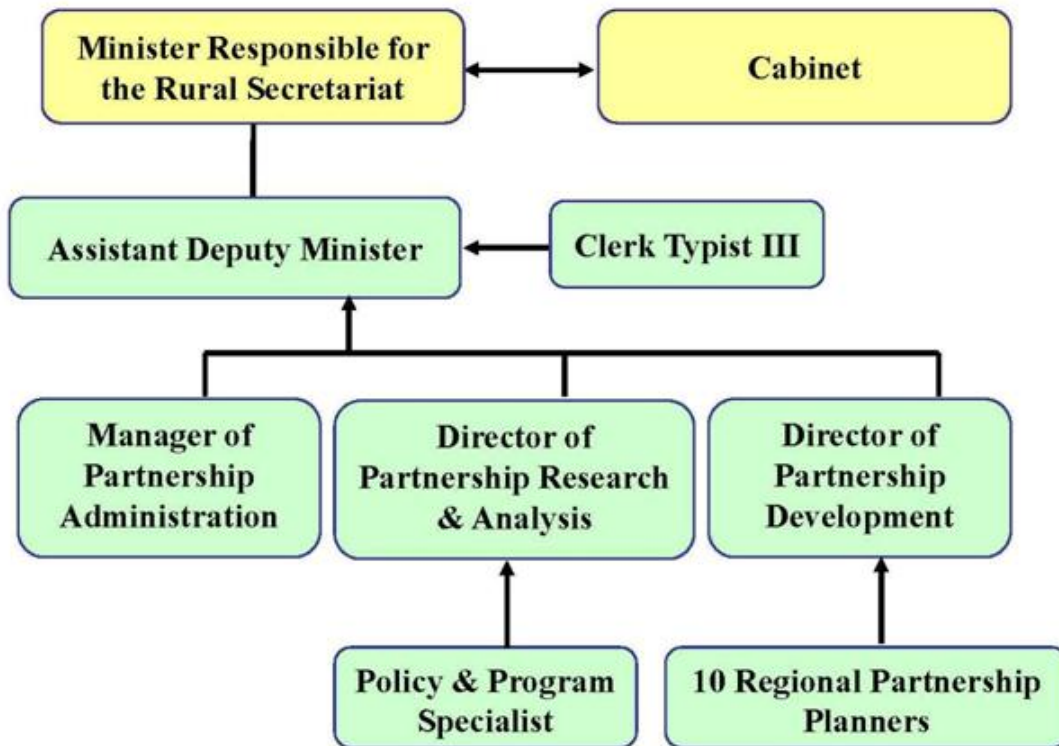
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Rural Secretariat in the areas of:

- Citizen-based policy advice
- Public dialogue and engagement
- Collaboration
- Research

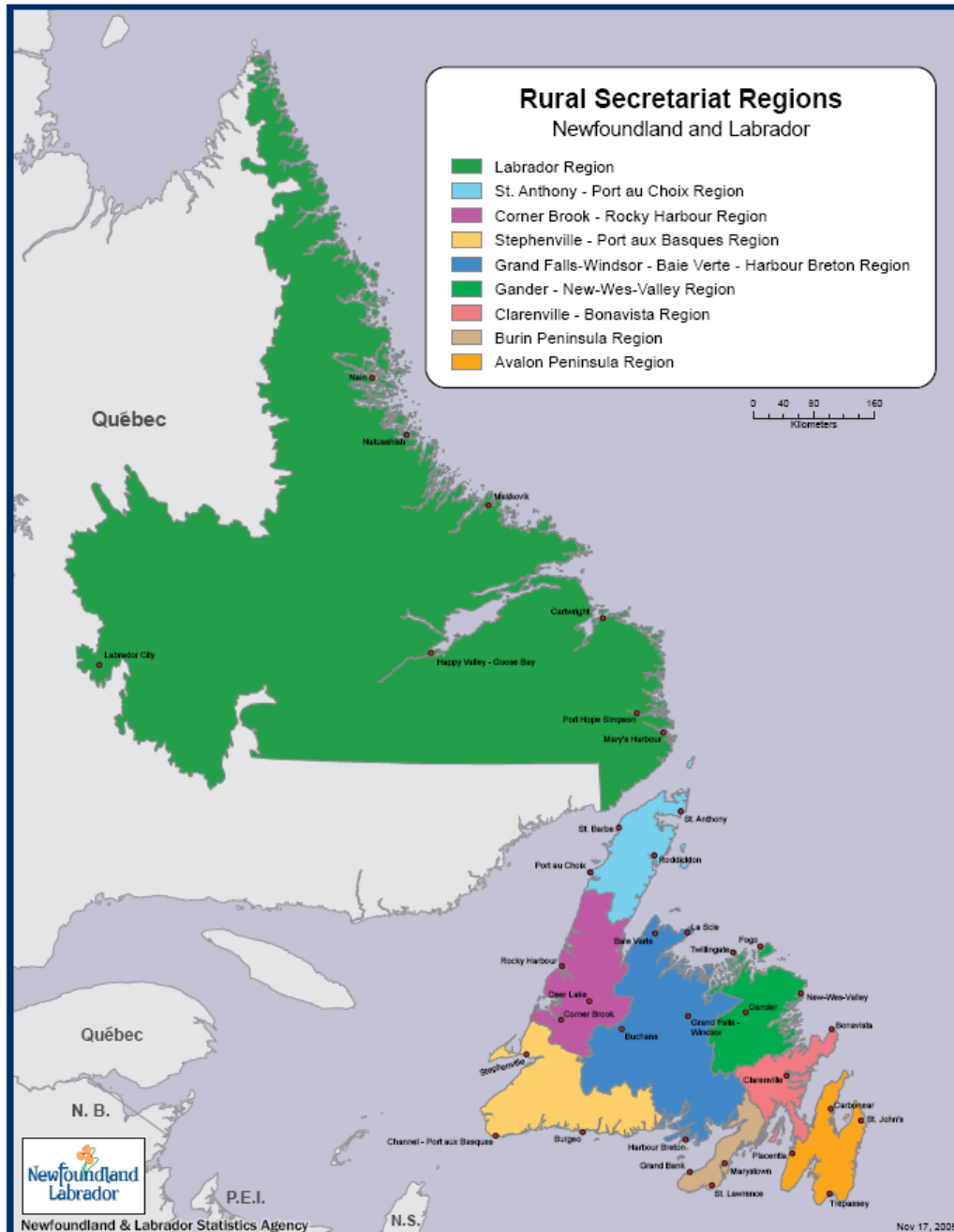
Focus Areas/Components of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is:
	addressed in the council's activity plan
1. Citizen-based policy advice	x
2. Public dialogue and engagement	x
3. Collaboration	x
4. Research	x

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Rural Secretariat Organizational Chart



APPENDIX C: MAP OF RURAL SECRETARIAT REGIONS



APPENDIX D: MANDATES OF RURAL SECRETARIAT AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of rural Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach aimed at integrating economic, social, cultural aspects of rural and 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 rural concerns are considered throughout the Provincial Government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.
- Promote awareness of provincial and federal programs and services regarding rural communities.

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 Province.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, Employment Income usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify and advise the Provincial Government on policies and programs which either a) advance, b) negatively impact or c) need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- To advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about the economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will effect Provincial and Regional sustainability.

PHOTO CREDITS:



Courtesy of Marion McCahon



Courtesy of Marion McCahon



Courtesy of Marion McCahon



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