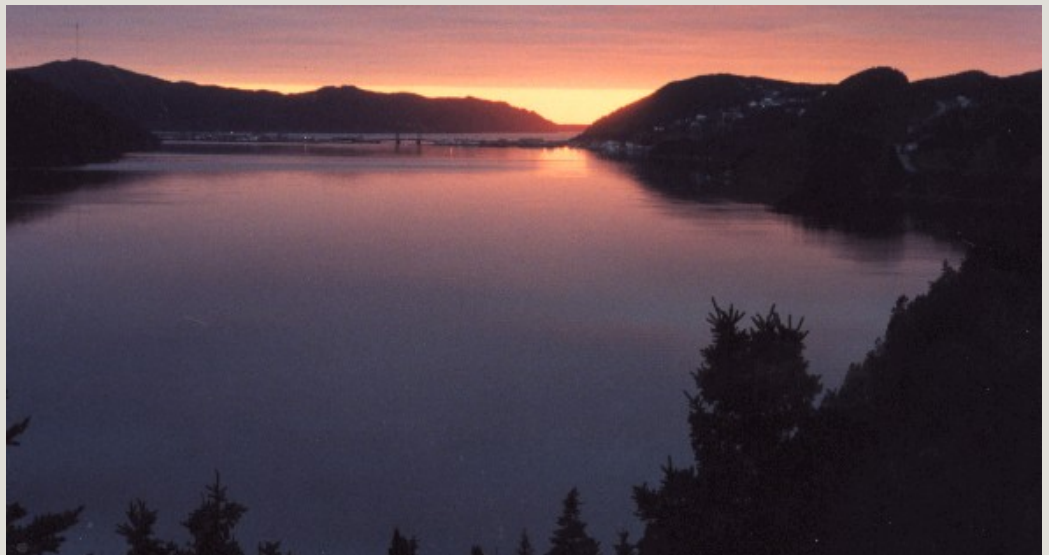




# Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat Executive Council

**Annual Activity Report 2011-12**



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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As chairperson for the Provincial Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2011-12 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, my signature is indicative of the council's accountability for the results reported.

In the past year, Provincial Council submitted two advice documents to the Provincial Government on the Government Appointment Process and Land Use Planning. They conducted informal research and reviewed stakeholder engagement data on the topics to assist them in developing consensus on their advice.

The Provincial Council also identified that it wanted to increase linkages with the Regional Councils and enhance Regional Council feedback and input into the initiatives of Provincial Council. As a result, a process was developed whereby council would solicit ideas from the Regional Councils' advice to identify possible priority areas for Provincial Council.

The Provincial Council will continue to work on identifying key issues impacting rural sustainability within the province. Our process for information sharing, collaboration and citizen engagement will continue as we move forward to meeting the commitments to the Provincial Government in 2011-14 planning period.

Sincerely,



Sheila Kelly-Blackmore  
Chair  
Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

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# 1. PROVINCIAL OVERVIEW

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The 2011 Census population for Newfoundland and Labrador was 514,536. This represents an increase of 1.8 percent since 2006.

The 2007 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Newfoundland and Labrador was \$24,900. For Canada, it was \$30,400 in 2007. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$16,400 for Newfoundland and Labrador in 2007.

In total, there were 208,842 private dwellings occupied by usual residents in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2011. This represents an increase of 5.9 percent of the number of private dwellings occupied by usual residents from 2006. For Canada as a whole, the total number of private dwellings occupied by usual residents increased 7.1 percent (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The 2007 self-reliance ratio for Newfoundland and Labrador was 79.4 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 unemployment rate for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 18.6 percent. The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 63.3 percent.

The number of individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2010 was 50,765. The 1991 figure was 93,025.

Census 2006 reported 25.1 percent of people 18 to 64 years of age in Newfoundland and Labrador do not have a high school diploma. About 74.9 percent of people aged 18 to 64 had at least a High School diploma. Approximately 13.3 percent of people in the province aged 18 to 64 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006.

A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2009-2010, 60.1 percent (+/-1.6 percent) of individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador rated their health status from very good to excellent. In 2009-2010, for Canada, 60.2 percent (+/-0.3 percent) of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as very good to excellent.

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

## 2. PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OVERVIEW

The Provincial Council is comprised of 14 members; seven female and seven male. The Provincial Council is comprised of one representative from each of the nine Regional Councils and Provincial at large members that bring a provincial perspective. If the regional representative is unable to attend the meetings of the Provincial Council, an alternate will attend to represent the region. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the province, including ten members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The council met two times in 2011-12.

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.

<b>Provincial Council members</b>	<b>Community</b>
<b>Chair</b>	
Sheila Kelly-Blackmore	Sandy Cove
<b>At-Large Members</b>	
Donna Butt	Trinity
Penelope Rowe	St. John's
Tony Keats	Dover
Kara Snow	St. Anthony
<b>Regional Representatives</b>	
Deborah Armstrong (Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton) Alternate: Vacant	Grand Falls-Windsor
James Farrell (Labrador) Alternate: Lori O'Brien	Wabush L'Anse au Loup
Nadine Decker (Gander-New-Wes-Valley) Alternate: David Regular	Fogo Island Summerford
Harold Murphy Alternate: Dominic Lundrigan	Parker's Cove Burin
Colleen Kennedy (Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour) Alternate: Don Downer	Rocky Harbour Corner Brook
Ted Lewis (St. Anthony-Port au Choix) Alternate: Gloria Toope	Croque Plum Point
Kerry Murray (Avalon Peninsula) Alternate: Maureen Sullivan	Conception Bay South Calvert
Calvin White (Stephenville-Port aux Basques) Alternate: Vacant	Flat Bay
Merv Wiseman (Clareville-Bonavista) Alternate: Marilyn Coles-Hayley	North Harbour Elliston

\*This list reflects membership as of March 31, 2012.

## 3. MANDATE

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The Provincial Council's mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- To 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.
- To identify and advise the Provincial Government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- To advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage the Provincial 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 Provincial Government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

## 4. LINES OF BUSINESS

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The Provincial 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

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The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

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

## 6. PRIMARY CLIENTS

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The primary clients of the Provincial Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat, Cabinet and Deputy Ministers and the Provincial Government.

The council also engages with officials of departments and agencies of the Provincial Government as well as individuals, groups and organizations in the province.

## 7. VISION

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The Provincial 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 identifies priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which consider economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

## 8. MISSION

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The Provincial 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 Provincial Council supports the mission by using innovative engagement, collaboration, and/or research tools, processes, methods and/or technologies to develop informed policy and decision making advice related to sustainability for submission to the Provincial Government.

For additional detail please refer to the Rural Secretariat Activity Plan 2011-14.



# 9. REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

In its 2011-14 Activity Plan, the Provincial Council identified one objective: to provide ongoing advice to the Provincial Government on issues that affect the region. The activities and performance of the council with respect to this objective, as outlined below, are in support of the Provincial Government’s strategic directions that are applicable to the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In keeping with the Provincial Government’s strategic directions, these tools include but are not limited to research activity and citizen engagement which provide input into the council’s policy advice submissions. The Provincial Council will be reporting on the same objective for each year of the plan.

## 9.1 Issue 1: Provide Advice to Government

The Provincial Council believes that developing a consistent appointment process for Provincial Government appointed bodies will improve the current appointment process. Additionally, making information on the roles and responsibilities of appointed volunteers more readily available could open the field of candidates thereby expanding the range of expertise and backgrounds of government appointed boards, agencies and commission. The timeliness of the appointment process plays an important role in government appointed bodies fulfilling their mandate and is crucial to long term sustainability. Provincial Government appointed bodies of various types play an important part in Newfoundland and Labrador including providing advice to Ministers, assisting with the delivery of public services and carrying out important regulatory as well as grant and funding functions.

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

**Measure:** Provided advice

Indicators	Accomplishments
Issue Identified	<p>Over the course of their deliberations, Provincial Council members brought forward the issue of vacancies on Regional Councils.</p> <p>Through further discussions, Provincial Council concluded that the challenges experienced by Regional Councils were not unique to the Rural Secretariat but to various Provincial Government appointed bodies. As a result, the members decided to provide advice to government on the Government Appointment Process in Newfoundland and Labrador.</p>

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Researched issue</p>	<p>The Provincial Council conducted some informal research on how appointments are made across government and discovered that there is currently no consistent approach to the process of appointing individuals and/or organizations to government boards and committees in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a result, the Provincial Council looked to several other jurisdictions to examine how they administer the appointment process and to determine if there are existing best practices that could be employed here. The jurisdictions that were examined are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Ontario</li> <li>• Government of Canada</li> <li>• Government of Scotland</li> </ul> <p>Through its research and deliberations, the Provincial Council identified some common elements in all processes that were examined which included, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A board, individual or department was responsible for all government appointed bodies;</li> <li>• There is an application and screening process;</li> <li>• There is an online database of public appointed bodies; and</li> <li>• The vacancies and upcoming positions are advertised with roles, duties and qualifications identified</li> </ul>
<p>Consensus developed on advice to the Provincial Government</p>	<p>The presentation of the research enhanced discussions at the Provincial Council table. Members deliberated the issue and came to a consensus on some suggested guiding principles for government which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance public confidence through a fair, open and transparent appointment process;</li> <li>• Be proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the post and the size and weight of their responsibilities;</li> <li>• Provide clarity and structure on roles</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>and responsibilities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a wider range of people to apply for public appointments; and</li> <li>• Be accessible and informative.</li> </ul> <p>The council's advice identified three options for government to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Appointment Secretariat;</li> <li>• Commissioner of Public Appointments;</li> <li>• Hybrid Model whereby board, agency and commission members have the autonomy to appoint individuals as well as government.</li> </ul> <p>The Provincial Council deliberated what elements the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should consider with respect to government appointed bodies. The following is a list of elements that they came to a consensus on adopting in order for government to achieve the principles stated above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directory of public appointed bodies;</li> <li>• Advertise vacancies and upcoming positions;</li> <li>• Application process that is consistent across government;</li> <li>• Standards established for participation;</li> <li>• Utilize a web based site as well as other avenues to improve accessibility to the appointment process, positions, and duties of such positions.</li> </ul>
Communicated advice to Government	The council submitted its advice to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador in October 2011.

**Discussion of Results:**

The council has met its objective of providing advice to the Provincial Government. The council identified the issue of the Government Appointment Process. Members conducted some informal research looking at how government currently appoints individuals to various boards, commissions, agencies and public bodies and looked at how other jurisdictions appointed individuals to public bodies. Through discussions and deliberations, the council came to a consensus on the advice that it was to submit to government for consideration. The Provincial Council submitted this advice in October 2011 to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

# 10. ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

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

The Provincial Council submitted an additional advice document on Land Use Planning to the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Municipal Affairs in October 2011.

The Provincial Council, in previous years, identified Land Use Planning as a priority issue. Due to time constraints, the council was unable to develop a policy advice document on Land Use Planning to be submitted to government. The council revisited the information that it had collected with respect to this topic.

The Provincial Council reviewed the background document on Land Use Planning that was developed through engagement with Regional Councils and some informal literature review. The council members also reviewed the data that was collected from stakeholders at the Land Use Planning Session held in 2010.

Based on the information that was received from stakeholders at the Land Use Planning Session, the council developed consensus on their advice to the Provincial Government.

The council recommended that government should develop a comprehensive and inclusive model for consideration in the implementation of a Land Use Planning Policy which includes:

- A review of current land use planning within government and a gap analysis of planning needs;
- A full land use policy review and gap analysis of policy needs;
- A full scan and analysis of associated land use legislation; and
- The adoption of an oversight model that serves as a vehicle for policy and planning as well as an implementation tool should be considered in the form of a Land Use Advisory Council or an equivalent entity that has stakeholder input and feedback in the development of such an entity.

In addition, it identified some suggested guiding principles to be incorporated within the policy. The guiding principles suggested include:

- There must be fair and equitable application.
- Application of rules need to consistent and transparent.
- There must be an integral component of rationalization criteria that can be measured against environmental, cultural, historical, adjacency principles, social and economic needs.
- There must be statutory empowerment for any land use plan, planning authority or other tools required to implement a plan.

- There needs to be mandatory land ownership registration.
- Mandatory stewardship practices needs to incorporated and enriched by incentive based programs.
- Planning authorities need to be representative and inclusive of all stakeholders. It is important to have regional autonomy and input to allow for flexibility in policy that meets the need of regional differences and allows regional autonomy throughout the province.
- There must be accountability for planning and implementation of plans.
- There must be a judiciously fair and open process for land use conflict and grievance resolution.

# 11. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

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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 the Provincial 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 clearly and effectively 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 the Provincial Government and fosters collaboration.

# APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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## 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:

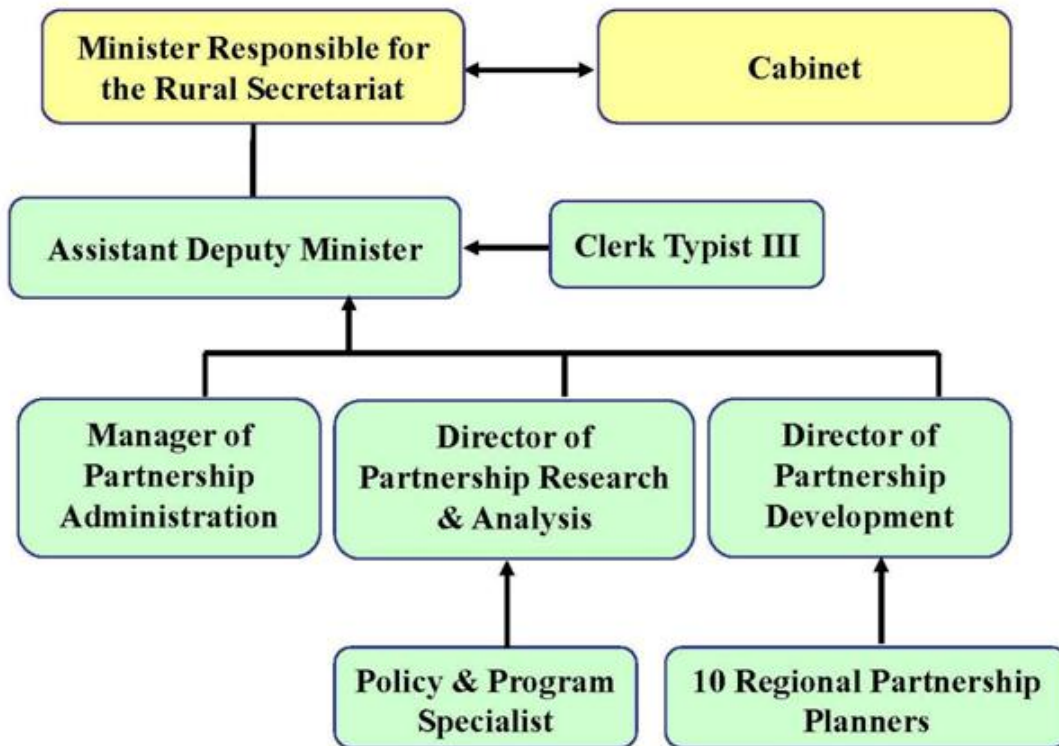
- Citizen-based policy advice
- Public dialogue and engagement
- Collaboration
- Research

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	
3. Collaboration	
4. Research	X

# APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

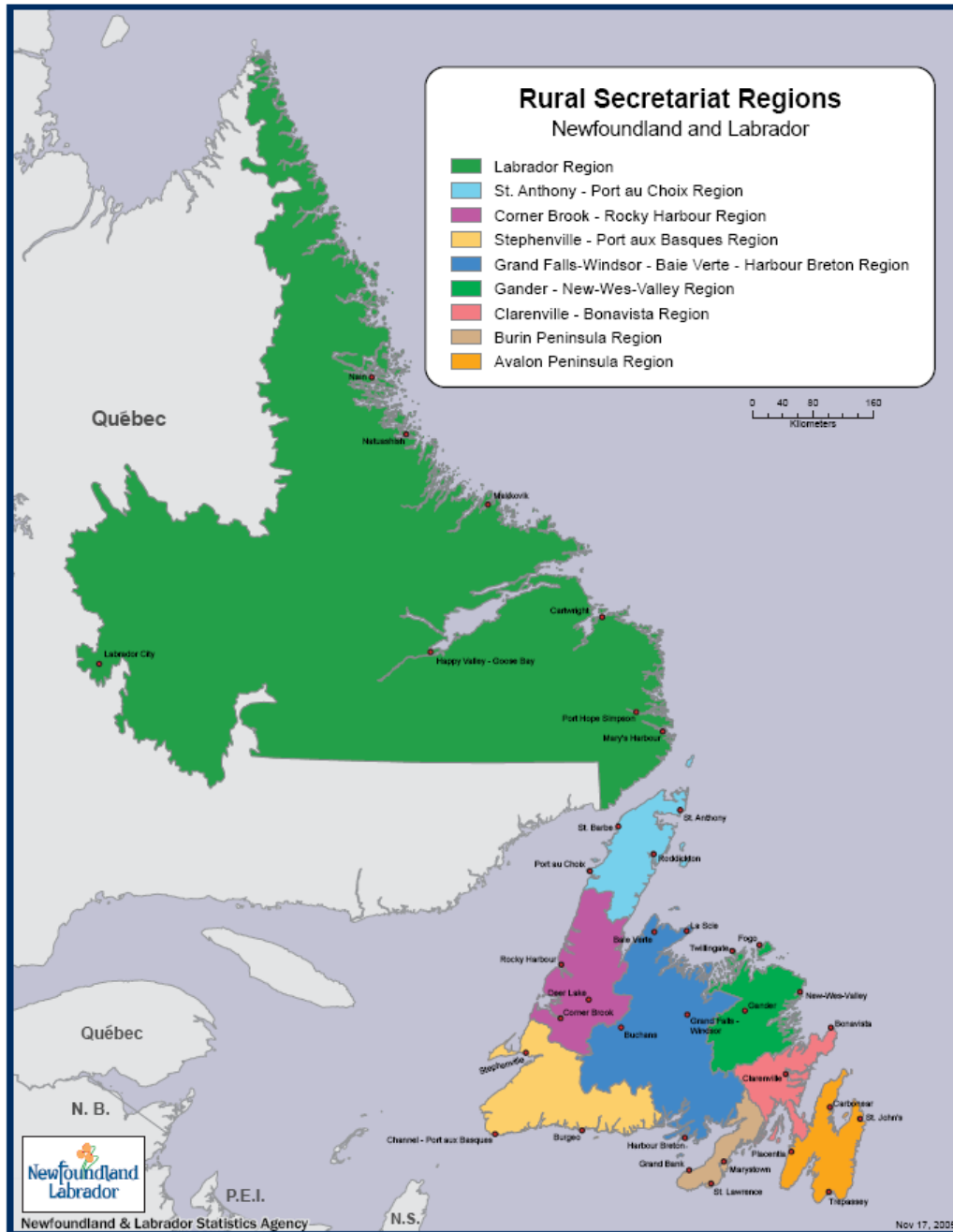
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## Rural Secretariat Organizational Chart





# APPENDIX C: MAP OF RURAL SECRETARIAT REGIONS



# APPENDIX D: MANDATES OF RURAL SECRETARIAT AND REGIONAL COUNCILS

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## **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 Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat**

The Regional Council's mandate is to:

- 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.

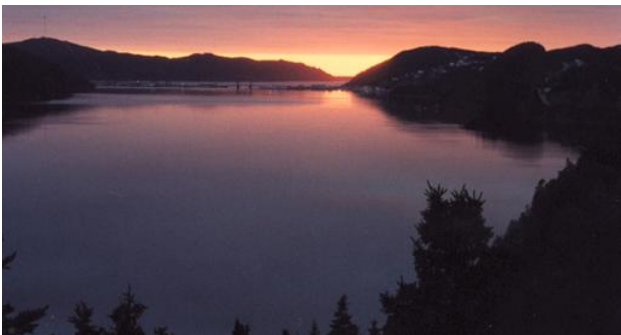
Photo Credits:



Courtesy of Loretta Lander



Courtesy of Edith Samson



Courtesy of the Rural Secretariat



Rural Secretariat