



WERAC

*Wilderness and Ecological
Reserves Advisory Council*

*Advising government on the creation and management
of wilderness and ecological reserves*

Annual Report 2006-2007

NF
ENV-1
A25W5
2006/07
c.2

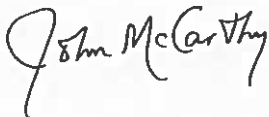
MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIR

As Co-Chairs for the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) and in accordance with Government's commitment to accountability, we hereby submit our 2006-07 **Annual Activity Report** detailing the activities of the Advisory Council from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007. As Co-chairs of WERAC we are responsible and accountable for the results contained within this report.

Under the authority of the **Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act**, our Council advises Government on the establishment, management and termination of wilderness and ecological reserves within the province. Our duties generally involve consultations with interested government departments, industry stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, other civic bodies and the general public, and the reporting to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council through the responsible Minister. Using the best scientific information available and the most comprehensive understanding of social and economic impacts of conservation areas, we advise Government on matters related to wilderness and ecological reserves.

In accordance with the Minister's strategic direction on the establishment of a Natural Areas Systems Plan (NASP), WERAC is committed to identifying and examining areas of the province for reserve designation and to ensuring that all public and private interests are considered when reserves are being planned and established.

In conclusion, we would like to acknowledge WERAC members for their interest in and generous commitment to the protection of our province's natural heritage. Furthermore, we thank the staff of the Parks and Natural Areas Division for their constant support and wise guidance.



John McCarthy, Co-Chair



Christine Doucet, Co-Chair

15983

ADVISORY COUNCIL OVERVIEW

The Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) advises Government through the Minister of Environment and Conservation on the establishment, management and termination of wilderness and ecological reserves within the province. The Council consists of 11 members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council for a three-year term.

Council members serve as volunteers; however, travel, accommodations and related costs are covered by the current account budget of Parks and Natural Areas Division, Department of Environment and Conservation. During the fiscal year 2006-07, WERAC's budget was \$44,000. Expenses incurred by WERAC are included in the financial statement of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Typically, the council meets four times a year, for two days each time at various locations around the province. The Secretariat is provided by the Parks and Natural Areas Division in the person of:

Mr. Paul A. Taylor, Natural Areas Planner
Natural Areas Program, Parks and Natural Areas Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
33 Reid's Lane, Deer Lake, NL, A8A 2A3
werac@gov.nl.ca

Together, WERAC and the Division work together to ensure that all public and private interests are considered when reserves are being planned, established and terminated. WERAC makes its recommendation on reserve creation/termination to Government, Government itself making the final decision.

Current Membership*

Name	Role	Residence
Mr. John McCarthy	Co-Chair	St. John's
Ms. Christine Doucet	Co-Chair	Corner Brook
Mr. Bill Montevecchi	Member	St. John's
Mr. Len Zedel	Member	St. John's
Mr. Bill Kelly	Member	Goose Bay
Ms. Laura Jackson	Member	St. John's
Mr. Bruce Porter	Member	Lewisporte
Mr. Tony Ryan	Member	Port Saunders
Ms. Luise Hermanutz	Member	St. John's
Mr. Peter Genge	Member	Labrador City
Ms. Phyllis Baird	Member	St. Andrew's

* The memberships of Mr. John McCarthy, Mr. Bill Kelly and Ms. Phyllis Baird expired in October 2005.

NF
ENV-1
A2SWS
2006/07
c. 2

ACTIVITIES

Meetings

The Advisory Council met four times during the 2006/2007 fiscal year: May 10-11 and October 18-19 in Deer Lake, December 5-6 in St. John's, and March 13-14 in Goose Bay. Meeting proceedings normally include, among other agenda items, a review of incoming/outgoing correspondence, an update and discussion on the status of candidate areas, and formal presentations by government departments, industry stakeholders, the general public, and other bodies. Business minutes are recorded and on file with WERAC's Secretariat.

A strategic planning session held during the May meeting developed a list of priority candidate areas – areas WERAC will consider establishing either as wilderness or ecological reserves in the near future. The list included the following study areas on the island, Ripple Pond/Lockyear's Waters, Highlands of St. John, Rodney Pond, and Middle Lawn Islands, and in Labrador, the Lac Josph-Atikonak study area.

At the Advisory Council's October meeting, members participated in a field trip to the Highlands of St. John/Doctors Brook study area on the Great Northern Peninsula. Accompanied by the Provincial Botanist, WERAC surveyed the proposed boundaries and assessed various land-use activities.

WERAC promotes the benefits of protected areas through presentations made to Government Ministers and their staff, the private commercial sector, non-governmental organizations, other civic bodies and the general public. During the December meeting WERAC organized a presentation for the Premier's Business Advisory Board which will be presented on April 2, 2007. During this meeting WERAC discussed the proposed NASP with Clyde Jackman, Minister of Environment and Conservation and Deputy Minister Brenda Caul.

The final meeting of the fiscal year was held in Goose Bay, Labrador. At this meeting, WERAC discussed and reviewed a proposal to Government requesting provisional status for Middle Lawn Islands study area. A number of presentations were also made by various agencies including the Wildlife Division, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, the Nunatsiavut Government, and Parks Canada.

Candidate Areas

Throughout this reporting period, WERAC has continued to review and examine areas of interest. Additional files, active and outstanding, include Sandy Cove, Mistaken Point Extension and Little Grand Lake. Each of these files is at a different stage of the reserve establishment process. The following outlines WERAC's progress on these three files:

(i) Sandy Cove

Sandy Cove study area, located on the Great Northern Peninsula, is proposed to protect the endangered endemic plant, Long's braya. On June 16, 2005, WERAC requested that

Government establish a 15 hectare area near the community of Sandy Cove as a provisional ecological reserve. During its March 2007 meeting WERAC was informed that Government approved a provisional ecological reserve. The area will be officially designated in early April 2007 once the Order and Regulations are reviewed and approved by the Clerk of Executive Council.

(ii) Mistaken Point Extension

Mistaken Point Extension Emergency Ecological Reserve was established on January 6, 2003, to provide protection to a newly discovered fossil site adjacent to Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve. The Order establishing the emergency reserve expired before recommendations could be submitted to Government for review. At the request of WERAC a new Order was issued on March 13, 2007 by the Minister of Environment & Conservation, re-establishing the emergency extension with a slightly modified boundary. Recommendations from both WERAC and Government are now required by March 2009 to incorporate the extension emergency boundary into the existing Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve.

(iii) Little Grand Lake Provisional Ecological Reserve

Little Grand Lake Provisional Ecological Reserve (731 km²) protects extensive bogs and barren, as well as mature boreal forest that is prime habitat for the endangered Newfoundland marten. On February 11, 2004 a public discussion was held on the proposed management plan and on January 25, 2005, a report detailing WERAC's recommendations on establishing the area as an ecological reserve was submitted to Government for review. To date Government has not made a decision on reserve establishment.

Natural Areas Systems Plan (NASP) study areas

Creating and maintaining a network of properly designed and legally designated protected areas is one of the key ways WERAC works to ensure the preservation of Newfoundland and Labrador's natural heritage. Over the coming years WERAC will continue to support the development of a Natural Areas Systems Plan (NASP), a key strategic direction of Government. To accomplish this, WERAC will review priority issues for candidate areas on a regular basis and help promote the benefits of protected areas by consulting with interested stakeholders, responding to correspondence and conducting presentations for stakeholders. A representative from WERAC will actively participate as a member of a Deputy Minister-appointed Working Committee reviewing study areas in the proposed NASP.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Logo

Development of a logo and stationary letterhead and tagline was finalized this year. The brand chosen gives WERAC an identity and addresses concerns about the role of the Advisory Council vis-à-vis Government.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The development of a conservation areas network for the province presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Through the establishment of conservation areas that protect and preserve outstanding components of our natural heritage we will provide a solid foundation for sustainable development that considers the ecological, economic and cultural pillars of authentic human development. WERAC will continue to participate at a Working Committee level with Government officials in the drafting of a Natural Areas System Plan. WERAC will also ensure that all public and private interests are fairly and judiciously considered during the planning and establishment process of conservation areas under the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act.

A significant obstacle hindering the operational effectiveness of WERAC is the necessity to make timely appointments and/or reappointments to the committee after the lapse of members' appointed mandates. The terms of appointment for three WERAC members expired in October 2005 and there is an urgent need to address the reappointment or replacement of these individuals. Returning the Advisory Council to full 11- person membership would ensure the proper functioning of WERAC. Fortunately, expired members have continued to participate and will do so until further direction is received from government.

Another concern is the provision of timely review of WERAC recommendations. Recommendations submitted to Government for review need to be officially addressed in a timely manner so that regulatory and operational commitments and deadlines are met. WERAC intends to work with the Department to address these concerns.

NF ENV-1 A25W5 2006/07 c.2
Newfoundland and Labrador. Wilderness
and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council.
Annual report

NF ENV-1 A25W5 2006/07 c.2
Newfoundland and Labrador. Wilderness
and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council.
Annual report

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER