

# REES' Pieces

## Bancroft & Friends VS Government

Tomorrow, April 1<sup>st</sup> will reveal a multitude of things, not as an "April Fools Joke", but a decision by the Nova Scotia Supreme Court which will set the destiny of what will or could happen with the 100+ Provincial Parks and Premier Rankin's legacy.

An unintended consequence of the decision will be the life-long reputation of Premier Iain Rankin, who might have his reputation established within the first month of winning the Liberal leadership and automatically becoming premier to succeed Stephen McNeil.

Premier Rankin was thrust into the middle because he was Minister Lands and Forests, in March 2019, when the provincial government delisted "Owl Head" Provincial Park as a park enabling it being secretly sold to a private developer wishing to establish a Golf Course within a development plan for the 284 hectare Eastern Shore coastal property.

Rankin is culpable as are others in the matter, because as a cabinet member he assisted the government to keep the "delisting" a secret for over nine months. Recently, a large portion of Rankin's campaign to win the leadership was based on protecting the environment and pushing ahead for a green economy.

If the Supreme Court decision rules in favour of Bob Bancroft and friends, Rankin has a credibility problem. His future actions will reveal if he abides by his decisions in March 2019, or he aligns himself with his recent appeals for environmental protection and a green economy.

The facts are simple. The 100+ areas referred to by the provincial government as "provincial parks", including Owl's Head, are vulnerable to ongoing political whims. The areas are vulnerable, because the provincial government has not officially and legally designated them as part of the Provincial Parks Act.

Rankin could avoid province-wide criticism by immediately announcing a program to move forward to officially enact the 100+ parks into the Provincial Parks Act and a community-based plan for their enhancement should the court uphold Bancroft and Eastern Shore Forest Watch friend's claim the site was removed from the protected areas designation unilaterally and without public notice.

This writer who is concerned, not a tree hugger, about the environment and demands honesty, integrity and transparency from elected officials, I have some thoughts about the possibilities, and what could happen:

- All provincial parks should become enshrined into the Provincial Parks Act;
- Forested parts of the parks should be farmed to enhance value, be an educational tool, and become an icon of the community;
- Local volunteer groups would willingly step forward to assume a meaningful role;
- Park staff and local groups could arrange public events to demonstrate forestry techniques using horses and oxen, no machines, which would become an educational tool for school students, park visitors and 30,000 owners of forest land;
- If the areas were "farmed", forest enhancement techniques such as management, thinning, etc could be used as practical demonstrations for students considering a forestry career, give them some on-site experience on a volunteer basis.

Products harvested on a moderate basis could be used as bark mulch, firewood for park campsites and limited conversion of timber into sawn lumber.

Quantities generated would not be large but there companies and dealers who specialize in selling "portable sawmills" and local contractors who would jump at the chance to demonstrate their product and skills.

Proceeds from the sale of sawn lumber should be used by local volunteer groups and park management to deliver the programs how to create a "model forest".

In areas where there are stands of maples, why not create a series of maple syrup demonstrations?

There are many more options available not mentioned here. First and foremost such a program should not be handled or directed from Halifax or regional Department of Forestry offices. Policy should be established, then ongoing execution turned over to local park management, who work hand-in-hand with local volunteer groups and professionals.

I am not suggesting the decision will be in favour of Bob Bancroft and Friends, but how Premier Rankin reacts to the April 1<sup>st</sup> Supreme Court decision will determine his legacy. Until next month, enjoy the passing of winter and the on-coming spring weather.

Maurice

# Letters to the editor



This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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## Withdraw the Biodiversity Act

Dear Editor:

There has been much discussion and debate over the past week about the Biodiversity Act. It is my view it is just one more attack on what I consider the Rural way of life. One more attempt for special interest groups to attempt to influence how others live their lives. They often use dramatic photo's to inflame rhetoric to advance their view. If I become a bit dramatic, well that's fair ball!

First let me say that six years as a board member with Federation of Canadian Municipalities and advocating for rural communities nationally, I can say with sincerity small towns and rural communities are becoming irrelevant in this country. With approximately 78% of the population living in 26 big cities, every policy developed at the national level is focused on those big cities and the electoral votes they supply. I cannot help relating this to the current Bio Diversity Act.

I have read the act twice and quite frankly it is difficult to really follow. Biodiversity as described in the act is "living

organisms from all sources" that is pretty broad. As I understand it this act was initially brought to the legislature in the last setting and withdrawn, when private land owners became aware and spoke out. It returned again this month with I understand one change, one single line in a fourteen page document: (a) establish and administer a biodiversity management zone on any land vested in Her Majesty in right of the province.

This would indicate these Biodiversity zones could only be identified on land owned by the government. If that is the case, why do we need this 14 page document that details the power invested in the conversation officers and the fines that would be imposed.

The emergency power references goes on and on. Again they own the land, they control who uses it and what is permitted on it. Why 14 pages of legal bureaucratic speak?

This past week has seen an outrage from rural communities; private land owners; the commercial forestry sector; farmers and recreational sportsmen and sportswomen.

Suddenly there are changes.

Oh, they say they need to be more clear, "we really, really mean just on crown land; no more emergency powers never on private land". If that is REALLY the case why not just withdraw the act and put it in the trash where it belongs.

It is because the Government wants to once again pander to what I call the ideological environmental zealots who live, for the most part, in their concrete jungles. Everything is paved over; they have to use tremendous amounts of carbon producing electricity and chemicals to treat their wastewater (mother nature looks after ours) where there are not brooks or NO LIVING ORGANISMS. These are the very same people who are trying to tell us what to do with our land.

For example here is a message one of them posted on my news feed yesterday. I removed only the person's name. Here is a direct quote:

"It cannot be at the expense of private property owners." Why not? Who should bear the expense if not those who benefit from the destruction of the habitats needed to

sustain life on the planet? I'm so tired of this kind of selfish rhetoric. If rural landowners are such great stewards of the land, why have we seen such destruction? It's greed, pure and simple. Yes, rural communities need our support but they don't get it when we allow industrial forestry interests to control the agenda".

I guess there was no destruction when they built their city. In the TRASH.

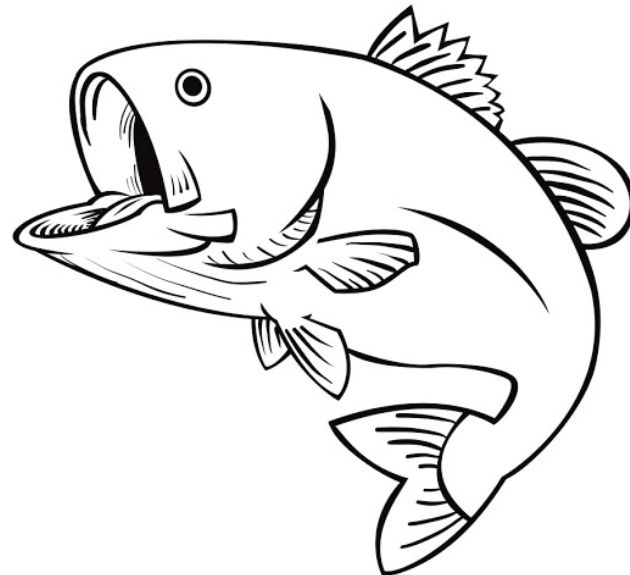
Tom Taggart, Bass River, NS

## Sportfishing Season Opens April 1

The 2021 sportfishing season opens April 1. To help curb the spread of COVID-19, anglers need to adhere to current public health guidelines. They must limit contact with other people, remain two metres (six feet) away from others, adhere to current gathering limits, and practise good hand washing and other hygiene steps.

Licences can be purchased online via the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture website at <https://novascotia.ca/fish/sportfishing/> or in person at Department of Lands and Forestry field offices and private vendors throughout the province.

In 2020, over 76,000 sportfishing licenses were sold; the highest participation since 1985. The rules for the 2021 season are outlined in the An-



glers' Handbook and Summary of Regulations, which is supplied to purchasers of fishing licences and is also available

online.

Sportfishing generates more than \$66 million annually for Nova Scotia's economy.

## Deadline for the May issue of The Shoreline Journal is April 20.

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1650) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert, Wentworth/Londonderry, Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

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