

Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark being Revalidated

It's going to be a very busy, and important, summer for the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark.

Three years after being added to the global list of UNESCO geoparks, a team of evaluators from the worldwide organization will be coming to Nova Scotia to check on things and potentially make recommendations for improvements.

The evaluators are expected to visit the area in late July with a report on how the park is doing expected later in 2023.

"We're very excited, but at the same time a little nervous about it," geopark executive director Sacha Brake said during a drop-in session in Advocate Harbour near the western end of the park that extends from Lower Truro in Colchester County to Apple River in Cumberland.

"Our small, but mighty staff is putting a lot of work into preparing. We're pretty confident it's going to go well."

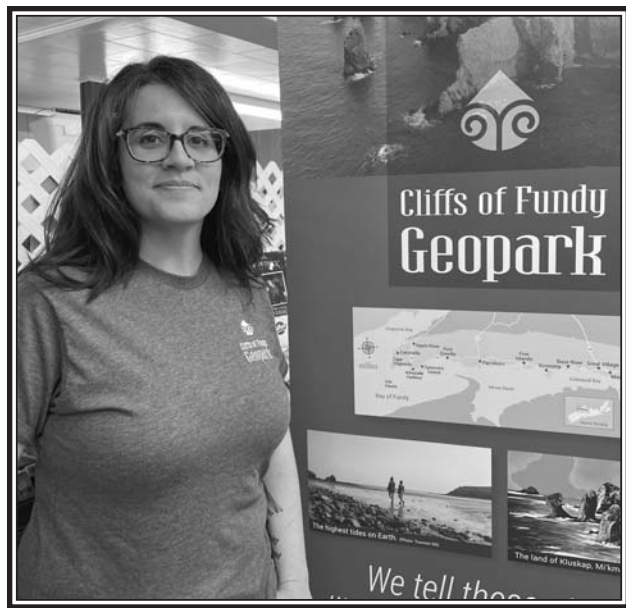
UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. There are currently 177 UNESCO geoparks in more than 46 countries.

Years of planning and preparation in both counties came to fruition in the summer of 2020 when the Cliffs of Fundy was added to the global list of geosites. It's the first one in Nova Scotia and one of only a handful in Canada.

Cumberland municipal councillor Carrie Goodwin is chair of the board of directors for the geopark. She said the board is excited about the revalidation visit, but isn't taking anything for granted.

"We're excited but nervous," Goodwin said. "We're putting all the finishing touches on all the geosites which involves new signage and interpretation in geological language everyone can understand. A lot depends on supply trains and having contractors to do the work to get the signs in the ground. It's going to be an exciting summer."

The Cliffs of Fundy was selected following a site visit in 2019 that saw Asier Hilario of Spain and Nikolaos Zouros of Greece spend three days in the region, meeting with project supporters and visiting some of the sites that make up the geopark, such as Cape Chignecto Provincial Park in Advocate Harbour and nearby Cape d'Or and the Old Wife at Five Island's Provincial Park in Colchester County.



Sacha Brake, Executive Director, Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark stands alongside a large poster. She, along with the board of directors have been busy getting ready the 3 year revalidation process which is underway this summer. (Contributed)

Since then, Brake said a lot of work has gone on behind the scenes including ensure there's proper wayfinding signage, no small task considering the geopark has more than 2,600 square kilometres in mostly rural Nova Scotia as well as a 150-kilometre coastal drive from one end of the park to the other.

"It's a big challenge because there are so many ins and outs and so many pockets where things like cellphone service isn't optimal. It's something we continue to work on, along with some interpretive panels that show the geological timelines of the area as well as showing how rich the Mi'kmaw heritage is here," Brake said. "Those are just two examples of some of the things they'll be looking at. There's a big spreadsheet of things we need to do, and they'll come check it out to see how we're doing."

While designation occurred in the recent past and activities were hindered by the global COVID-19 pandemic, Brake said people continue to be excited with the park's potential and what it means to raising awareness of the area's geological and Indigenous past while promoting the Fundy Shore in both counties to in-province visitors and tourists from across the country, continent and around the globe.

The geopark committee has also partnered with Tourism Nova Scotia on a six to eight-week awareness and marketing campaign that included video that was watched more than 400,000 times

on YouTube and saw advertising appear on more than seven million people's webpages. More than 50,000 people also clicked advertising to take them to the geopark's website.

"People are interested in the geopark and they're looking for information," Brake said. "It was hard to judge during COVID, but we're finding now that people are very interested in the geopark and they're looking for information. That's very good news for tourism and hopefully we'll see the benefits of that this year."

Since accepting the job in January, Brake has been touring communities within the geopark with a travelling roadshow of sorts, showing what the geopark has to offer and listening to what people have to say.

"The response has been tremendous. It's no secret to people here that this is one of the most beautiful places in the country, if not the world. That's not a surprise," Brake said. "There are also a lot of people who want to be involved and something I'm hearing is people asking what they can do to help. It's nice to be incredibly welcomed."

Brake said there will be numerous events throughout the geopark in the coming months to help beautify the coastline with community cleanups as well as more open houses to introduce people to the park. Once the evaluators are done their work, they'll pass it over to the UNESCO geopark organization that will either provide a green card to keep going, or a yellow card with some recommendations to address moving forward.

"We're really confident we're in a very good place," she said.

Coady Institute Welcomes the World

68 social change makers now taking courses on campus including 16 diploma in development leadership participants and 9 youth leaders from across island.

Whether it is in the classroom or in the hallways, there is renewed energy and excitement at St. Francis Xavier University's Coady Institute as 68 social change makers from 22 countries around the world are now studying on campus. 43 participants arrived recently to take part in one of three

certificate courses. They will join 16 Diploma in Development Leadership participants who have been at Coady since late May and 9 youth leaders from across Canada who are a part of the Pathy Foundation Fellowship Program.

This year marks a full return to on campus educational programming for Coady Institute following the Covid-19 pandemic. The social change makers with a passion for community development have selected to take a course cen-

tered on social entrepreneurship, feminist advocacy, or climate change. For two weeks, Coady facilitators will use a practice-focused, participatory approach to accompany participants as they learn about asset-based, citizen-led com-

community development. "We are excited to be offering our Diploma in Development Leadership course in a unique, new format that is a blend of online and in person learning followed by accompaniment as the 16 participants return to their communities and organizations," interim Executive Director Eileen Alma says.

Strengthening Asset Management in Nova Scotia

The Government of Canada, along with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), announced an investment of \$348,460 in seven Nova Scotia communities. This funding will help them make data-driven decisions about key infrastructure and ensure long-term infrastructure performance.

The Municipality of the District of East Hants is receiving \$50,000 to assess current capacity of a water treatment plant and a wastewater treatment plant and compare that capacity to future treatment requirements. It will also collect asset management data for computer modeling of existing water, wastewater, and stormwater systems to determine asset needs.

The Town of Stellarton is receiving \$49,950 to complete an inventory of its major assets including linear assets, buildings and structures and fleet, and develop a comprehensive asset management program document that will assist in operationalizing asset management in the municipality.

Grief Camps July & August

Colchester East Hants Hospice Society are accepting applications for their Grief Summer Camps for children. A Hospice Society press release said, "We understand that losing a loved one can be tough for anyone, especially children. Our grief camps are designed to provide a safe haven for kids between the ages of 6-12 who are struggling to cope with loss".

Join us for one of our first FREE Grief Summer Camps July 17-20 in Truro and August 21-24 in Elmsdale.

The camps offer a unique

opportunity to learn from each other, express themselves, and make new friends. At our camps, we provide a creative and supportive environment where children can explore their feelings and develop healthy coping techniques.

Join us for a memorable experience that will help your child heal and grow. Contact us to learn more or apply: 902-893-3265 or info@cchospice.org We will set up interviews with parents/guardians and potential campers.

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