



Less than half of the approximately 20 residents attended the Geopark public meeting at Victoria Hall, Bass River on January 8th were from immediate Bass River area. (Rees Photo)



Anita MacLellan, Geopark steering committee member, Bill Casey, MP Cumberland-Colchester and Colchester Mayor Christine Blair discuss expanding the Geopark area to include Bass River area up to the Portapique River. (Rees Photo)

## Bass River Likes Geopark Project

By Maurice Rees

During a public meeting at Victoria Hall, Bass River on January 8th area residents in attendance suggested the inclusion area for the proposed Geopark be expanded beyond Bass River to include the area up to Portapique. Comments from the audience, following Dr John Calder's visual presentation were very positive and encouraged proceeding with the initiative to seek Geopark designation as soon as possible. The Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark project has been in the works for a couple of years with the steering committee holding

several public meetings along the Parrsboro shore. Although Bass River, like many areas along the shore, is steeped in history, several residents including Wendy Cox and Tom Taggart suggested the area's real history is set in Castlereigh. Their observation suggested to include Castlereigh would require expansion further down the shore with the Portapique River being the easterly boundary.

Global Geoparks are not "parks" as most people think of them. Geoparks do not impose any new or special restrictions or limits on what

can occur in the area. Rather, Global Geoparks are established to link geologically significant sites with tourism experiences and cultural attractions in a defined area, to increase international tourism and support sustainable economic development.

Since mid 2016 a series of public meetings have been held in Advocate, Port Greville, Parrsboro and Economy. More than 100 people attended these meetings and there was unanimous support that the Geopark concept was a great fit for the Parrsboro Shore. After these meetings a formal Steering Committee was established by the Cumberland Geological Society, the group currently overseeing the development of the proposal to establish a new UNESCO Global Geopark along the Parrsboro Shore.

The steering committee has been very active preparing the application and consulting with area residents. The Bass River meeting on January 8th was much more positive in tone than a similar public meeting held in Economy last spring, where several blueberry farmers voiced opposition for fearing a loss of land rights and restrictions what a land owner could do with their property.

At the Economy meeting in spring 2017, Dr Calder, assisting Dr Tim Fedak's explanation, explained the UNESCO

involvement is simply to ensure there are minimum qualifications for establishing a Geopark and it has no involvement in the ongoing operation or establishing restrictions.

Dr Calder explained that although the Geopark Global Network is billed as a UNESCO umbrella, it is not a UNESCO initiative and restrictions which normally apply to other UNESCO projects, does not apply in the case of the global GeoPark network.

Dr Calder further confirmed if a project proceeds its accreditation could be rescinded every four years should the community find it was not working for them.

David Beattie, chair of the steering committee expressed pleasure with the positive community input and indicated even though a line has to be established on the boundaries of the park, even though there are not official boundaries, and he didn't see a problem expanding beyond Bass River to Portapique River to include the Castlereigh area.

The steering committee and a further advisory committee, yet to be formed, have mountains of work to complete the application and several approval levels. If various stages of the process can be completed to satisfaction of approval committees, it is hoped official designation will be received in time for the 2020 season.



Dr. John Calder chats with Williem Nan den Hoek on January 8th. Calder, a senior geologist, conducted the public meeting in Bass River to explain the concept of expanding the Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark to include the Bass River area. Residents suggested using the Portapique area as the cut-off point, so Castlereigh would be included. (Rees Photo)



Cumberland-Colchester MP, Bill Casey gets a laugh from Dr. Karen Ewing and Carol McNutt at the Geopark meeting in Bass River. (Rees Photo)

## Agriculture Waste to Resource Summit – March 6

Divert NS will host an Agricultural Waste to Resource Summit on March 6th at the Holiday Inn, Truro. The event will bring together key stakeholders in both the waste management and agriculture industries to identify new waste diversion opportunities.

The summit from 9:30 am to

3:15 pm will showcase innovative waste to resource initiatives already happening on-farm, highlight current challenges in managing agricultural waste, and identify opportu-

nities for the two sectors to work together to improve the environment.

An agenda will follow in February. More information is available by contacting: [klpoo-ley@divertns.ca](mailto:klpoo-ley@divertns.ca).





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