



Debert airport will be home-base for the four fixed wing water bombers and a coordination plane announced on May 14th. From left, Bruce MacLean, Bird Dog pilot with Forest Protection Ltd.; Ken Cox, Department of Natural Resources air attack officer; Gaetan Fournier, pilot team lead, Forest Protection Ltd.; and Kerry MacLean, Department of Natural Resources air attack officer, discuss procedures on the flight line in Debert last week. (Province of Nova Scotia)

Water Bombers to be based at Debert Airport

By Maurice Rees

Debert Airport is home-base for four fixed-wing water bombers and a co-ordination plane to provide more wildfire season protection for Nova Scotians. A \$6.5-million contract for four Air Tractor AT-802 water bombers and one Cessna Caravan Bird Dog was announced on May 13. It will run until September 30 but can be extended if needed.

“Our wildfire seasons are becoming more intense, more unpredictable and more demanding. We’ve learned that we already know how to respond and how to step up and support each other,” said Premier Tim Houston. “But we also need to make sure our teams have the very best resources available to them. These new additions to our fleet will help ensure we’re well prepared.”

The \$6.5-million contract is with Forest Protection Ltd. of New Brunswick and covers housing and maintaining the aircraft, as well as providing the pilots and other operational staff.

The home base for the planes is the Debert air tanker base.

In addition to the five aircraft, the Province is investing in equipment upgrades, including \$12.8 million – matched by the federal government – to modernize tools and replace its helicopter fleet. This investment is part of the \$6.8 million in wildfire response funding announced in Budget 2026-27; the remaining \$300,000 will cover three provincial air attack officers who co-ordinate the aircraft during wildfire response.

The Air Tractor AT-802 fixed-wing water bomber, also called a water tanker or air tanker, is an agile aircraft that is a good fit for Nova Scotia’s terrain. The water bombers can be loaded with water, fire foam or other fire retardants.

The Bird Dog leads co-ordination in the air-space around a fire to determine safe lines for the fixed-wing water bombers to follow. Wildfire risk season in Nova Scotia runs from March 15 to October 15.

Public Works May Director’s Report

By Michelle Boudreau

Public works is working with Corporate Services to review options for satellite office space. Staff have been extremely busy with work needed to support the arrival of Forest Protection Limited fleet of four fixed wing water bombers and a Cessna coordination plane. at the Debert A Airport. Tasks include hangar space improvement, Sewage lift station installation for west side of hangar, tie down installs, increasing

Security of the site via barricade installation, sweeping, gate installations, apron painting and water supply equipment.

The French River source water protection committee is drafting a watershed newsletter which is expected to be distributed to watershed residents this summer. Our annual monitoring program for Town of Truro sewage flows is ongoing. The data is used to develop invoicing for services.

Staff are working to update costs in preparation for upcoming capital budget discussions. Speed radar signs

continue to be deployed in various communities. We have two signs and have so far covered six locations from our original list. Staff will seek council input on additional requested sites in the coming months.

The cross-cut on Robie Street was necessary to install piping for the relocation of a Sewage lift station. Night work was employed on this project to help minimize traffic disruptions. Piping work is now complete. Warranty work to replace cracked sidewalk panels on old courthouse branch and Teviot will take place in the coming months.

Fee for installation of a new sewer lateral is now \$8,000. So far this fiscal we have Issued 45 sewer permits and 10 will require a new lateral. We have undertaken an initiative to digitize all of our paper records, including drawings, to free up space in the building.

The province has approved the creation of three lots on Hudson Street in Debert and our Economic development officer will be receiving expressions of interest focussed on creating affordable and attainable housing.

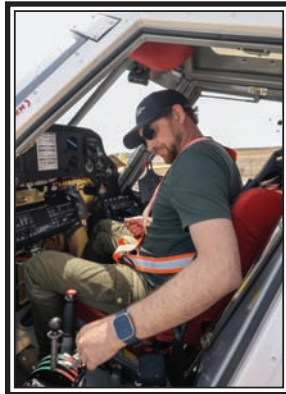
Staff are reviewing potential costs and logistics of installing fencing and new lighting at the Debert Airport. More details to follow at May council.

Staff are reviewing options to improve fire protection within the Debert water utility to support planned developments on Lancaster Crescent. Staff are providing support for a climate risk study which will identify any at-risk Infrastructure and communities, and serve as a support for future funding applications. Public works continues to provide support for the Fundy Discovery Site bridge project. We are providing information for upcoming area-rate budget reviews.

Staff attended sessions at Dalhousie University to discuss challenges with keeping pace with development demands, with the goal of identifying any potential partnerships with the university.

Any questions, concerns or comments are always welcomed.

Michelle Boudreau is Director of Public Works for the Municipality of Count of Colchester



Forest Protection Ltd.’s Phil Leblanc, Air Tractor AT-802 water bomber pilot, in the cockpit last week. (Province of Nova Scotia)

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Finding Flowers in the Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Geopark since 1940

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tograph them, so over the bank I went in July of 1960. The tiny plants grew close to the ground, as do most Alpine and Arctic plants. When I last visited in August of 2018, I was surprised to see that the small patches of these rare plants seemed to have shrunk in size. Erosion? Or?

A long-ago hike to Economy Falls was to see some Grape Fern - a very small, rare fern species. And more recently, on a hike at Ward’s Falls (not that many years ago I could hike to the Falls and up and over the ladder) a botanist friend showed me Geum species near one of the many bridges.

Autumn is fabulous in our Cliffs of Fundy Geopark! The Mi’kmaw/Acadian forest with the mixture of different hardwoods and conifers is unequalled anywhere. Drive through Moose River at the peak of autumn colour and you will need to be aware of vehicles stopped beside the narrow to admire and photograph the scenery.

Autumn and winter are wonderful times to be outdoors here, too. Identify the trees by their bark, look for Black Ash in the wet spots, and learn the lichen and mosses. Especially keep an eye out for Boreal Felt Lichens and enjoy the plants of every season.

A digression: When the Asters and the Goldenrod began to bloom, we would start picking berries and early August Apples for our families or to sell to help buy school clothes and shoes.



When Gordie Hatfield and others started hiring people – mostly school kids – to rake blueberries it was a great way

to earn some extra money. I loved to rake, but the old wooden rakes were heavy, and the best part was our shared picnic lunch time!

For more information or to ask a question about the Geopark contact: Geoscientists of the Geopark via email at: geoscience@fundygeopark.ca

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