



Gregor Wilson, left and John Perkins making a presentation to Colchester Council on February 6th. During the presentation they requested council send a letter to Minister of Natural Resources, which council decided not to do at its committee meeting two nights later. (Rees Photo)

## Council to Intercede on SuNNS Behalf

By Maurice Rees

Colchester council changed its mind and will be sending a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources to delay issuing an RFP for mining exploration in the Warwick Mountain area, which includes the French River and five other watersheds. At council committee meeting earlier in February denied a request by SuNNS to write a letter to DNR minister. When the matter was brought back to council on Thursday, February 22nd, Councillor Mike Gregory, who was absent from the committee meeting, spoke against refusing to send a letter.

SuNNS, a newly formed citizens group comprising a diverse group of concerned citizens working to ensure sustainable, locally driven economic and community development in Northern Nova Scotia make a presentation to council on February 6th and requested council write a letter to DNR requesting a one year delay in issuing an RFP for mining exploration. Two days later at committee meeting council denied the request.

John Perkins, Executive Director, CIMI retired and Gregor Wilson, Principal at CDHL of the Wilson Group of Companies, Ski Wentworth, Board of Directors as representatives of SuNNS told council the current focus is on preventing gold mining that threatens the environment & economy during their presentation to council during presentation night on February 6th.

In recent weeks, publicity concerning mining exploration has gained prominence because Colchester's Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee, through Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Masters and area councillor Gregory brought before council discussions about possibly establishing a Best Practices policy concerning the French River Watershed.

In the February issue, the Shoreline Journal reported in May of 2016, a representative from Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) attended a Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee (SWPC) meeting to brief the members on the potential presence of mineral deposits within the French River watershed area. DNR identified possible gold deposits within the watershed, and subsequently placed a closure on the French River watershed area, such that no new mineral claims could be registered in the area.

At their December meeting, Council Committee directed staff to begin work on the development of these Best Management Practices. During the January 11th committee meeting, staff report indicated

establishment of Best Practices was complicated and because DNR was significantly involved council staff was directed to discontinue research and development of Best Management Practice manual for Mineral exploration in drinking water supply areas, but to work with DNR and the community to develop and later implement the results of consultations with DNR.

At both meetings, it has been suggested initial results suggest there is high concentration of gold findings, perhaps some of the highest in region, and might be of interest to gold mining companies.

The Warwick Mountain area has been the site for prospector activity for the last three years. The French River is the source of drinking water for the Tatamagouche Water Utility. SuNNS representatives were asking council to as the Minister of Natural Resources to delay, for at least a year, issuing an RFP at the Prospector's and Mining Conference in Toronto in March.

The SuNNS research has shown gold mining operation could impact a major portion of the Cobequid Mountains involving 37 communities. Their fear is the potential mining area is the watershed which impacts the Wallace, Tatamagouche, Debert, Great Village, Bass River, and Belmont Rivers. In an overall basis, SuNNS representatives should gold mining be permitted approximately 1/3 of the Truro watershed could be impacted.

Part of their presentation provided data from a US Gold Mines Spills and Failures Report, released in July 2017, reviewed 27 gold mines responsible for 93% of all USA gold production. 100% of the mines had at least 1 spill and 74% failed to control contamination.

Perkins and Wilson likened permitting exploration is like taking the "Genie out of the bottle" and if exploration is permitted, major legal liabilities might occur, if all of a sudden development was not permitted.

On February 22nd, Councillor Gregory informed council he had received an email indicating DNR was listening to community concerns having agreed to delay issuing the RFP until early May from the anticipated issuance in March. Considerable discussion followed.

The original motion from February 8th committee meeting was defeated. Gregory then introduced a motion to write a letter to DNR asking to delay issuing an RFP until council, citizens and government departments could establish Best Management Practices policy.



A large number of spectators were in the visitor's gallery at Colchester Council on February 6th. Most of the people pictured above were supporting the SuNNS presentation being made by Gregor Wilson and John Perkins. (Rees Photo)

## Ski Wentworth Moving to 4 Seasons

By Maurice Rees

As part of his segment of the presentation, Gregor Wilson outlined research has shown Gold mining's impact on the local economy includes: Some temporary dirty dangerous jobs; Profits leave the local community, relative small benefit for Colchester County; Local residents, business owners and future generations bear the true long term economic cost, pollution, contaminated water sources and gold mining is Incompatible with current economic development pathway of the North Shore.

Prior to talking about the way he envisioned how the council should proceed, Wilson said mining threatens the foundation of our communities; drinking water & health; tourism & recreation, agriculture, fishing and North Shore brand. He said as an alternative to mining and extraction of ore, SuNNS would suggest Eco-friendly financially viable solutions which could attract 70,000 to 120,000 people to the area.

An increase of people to the area would support thriving local businesses such as Masstown Market, Tatabrew, Waldegrave Farm and many others. Encourage existing vibrant sectors to grow including maple products, agriculture, tourism and selective forestry.

He suggested imaginative market expansion for wood working/manufacturing, fishing and maple water. Maple water is a new product on the market, which is priced at 40 times the price of Maple syrup. From his own business expertise, Wilson said as an example of the tourism sector, Ski Wentworth is growing from 1 season to a 4 season operation. He said although it's in Cumberland County it benefits Tatamagouche, Masstown, Jost, Truro and other communities on both shores.

Under the topic of "What are we asking council?", Wilson asked Colchester Council to work with other counties

to develop an integrated sustainability plan for the North Shore; a community-based vision for economic development; Formally request the Minister of DNR to not release the RFP, with at least a one year delay, which would help pursue legal protection of the watershed(s).

Even though the earlier portion of the SuNNS presentation displayed negativity on the hazards of allowing exploration of Gold Mining, Wilson brought the presentation to a conclusion with some very important suggestions on how to proceed and how to get input and support from residents and local businesses.

He divided his remarks into two categories: undertake development of a North Shore Sustainability Strategy and most of all to move quickly to protect the watersheds. With regard to North Shore Sustainability Strategy inclusions would be: A blueprint for sustainable economic development in the

region; Alternative to extractive resources approach; Partnership between Colchester, Cumberland and Pictou Counties; Identify vision and objectives for sustainable economic development; Identify existing social, ecological and economic assets; Identify potential opportunities; Develop an action plan; Involve extensive community/first nations engagement and draw on best practices from other regions or initiatives.

Concerning what he envisions as the first step, Wilson suggested: Legal protection of watershed by designating the French River Watershed a Protected Area. He explained his research has indicated: Designation is not: land use zoning, expropriation, all or nothing: uses can be allowed, regulated, prohibited; 5 step process outlined by DOE. He concluded: Colchester has already done the steps with French River, but now needs only to modify step 4 and expand protection to other watersheds.

## Debert and Area Community Association

By Mary Adshade

Hello Everyone!! The weather is feeling like spring these days. It's been a busy month here in Debert. Winter Carnival took place... Oh what fun!! Congrats to the "Green Team" (see page 16 and 17).

Hockey Tournaments, Kitchen Party— always a great time, great friends and good music. Thank you to all who come out and take part, and thank you to all the people who help make these things possible..What a great community. Great community spirit!!! Thanks again.

March is sneaking up on us. A few things happening this month, so mark your calendars.

**March 3/2018** - Indoor Yard sale 9am-1pm Saturday (this was cancelled last month due to heating issues..Sorry for the inconvenience) This will be held at the Lodge 1191 Plains Road, Debert.

**March 13/2018** - Tupperware Merchandise Bingo 7:00pm Tuesday Night. Contact Marie Irving Benoit (902)956-1774 for more info (Held at the Lodge)

**March 17/2018** - Happy St. Patrick's Day!! Kitchen Party Saturday 1pm-3pm. (Held at the Lodge)

Chase the Ace Every Thursday Night!!! \$3 a ticket, you don't need to be there, we will call you.... Good luck everyone!! Held at Debert Legion

**March 19/2018** - Monthly Meeting for Debert and Area Community Association 7:30pm

Come on out and see what's happening, and show community support. (Held at the Lodge)

**March 21/2018** - Debert Days Committee Monthly Meeting.. 6:30pm. We are getting things started for the upcoming Debert Days. (Held at the Lodge)



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