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# South Cumberland NEWS

PO BOX #41 BASS RIVER, NS B0M 1B0  
 VOL. 8 NO. 10

MARCH 2026

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## Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Global Geopark Activities

The following is an update on activities of the Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Global Geopark for the month of January 2026 as presented to Cumberland Council at its meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Atlantic Canada UNESCO Tourism Corridor** - The Geopark continues to be involved in the Destination Canada's Corridor Project involving UNESCO-designated sites throughout Atlantic Canada. Requests for Proposals for Financial and Marketing and Communication expertise for the project were recently posted. Work with provincial Indigenous tourism organizations and experience development components of the project have been ongoing.

A funding announcement for this initiative was held February 19, at the Joggins Fossil Centre. Councillors were invited to attend to learn more about this exciting initiative. (See also page 1 story and photo in the Shoreline Journal)

**Strategic Plan Community Engagement Online Form** - The Geopark continues to gather input from community stakeholders for the development of its strategic plan. An online form was made available on the Geopark's website, social media channels, and circulated to key stakeholders. An engagement session with municipal staff will also take place in the month ahead.

**Three Sisters Centre (Eatonville) Revitalization Project** - Fundraising efforts are beginning to yield results to ready the Centre for a pilot opening this summer. A grant application was submitted to the NS Community Access Ability Program for replacement of the stairs and ramps at the Centre to allow accessible access. Another application is being prepared for a Provincial Recreation Facilities Grant as well.

Several community donations have been received or committed. Funds have been allocated to cladding an exterior wall and to contracting a project manager to work toward a summer opening.

Logo and brochure development is in the early stages for the Centre as well. There continues to be strong volunteer and community support for the initiative and incremental steps continue to be taken as resources are secured.

**The Shoreline Journal article:** Geoscientists in the Geopark - Geoscientists, Dr. Tim Fedak, Dr. David Piper and Caleb Grant wrote a brief article for February edition of The Shoreline Journal to promote the Geopark and engage local residents.

**Summer Student Applications** - the Geopark has been busy applying for summer student positions from both Federal and Provincial programs and was recently approved for a 9-week position through the Clean Foundation Internship Program.

**Nature Nova Scotia** - The Geopark's Community Engagement Coordinator, Will Bollwerk is now serving as the Cliffs of Fundy's representative on the Nature Nova Scotia Board.

**Atlantic Geoscience Society (AGS) Colloquium** - Geopark staff and representatives attended and presented at the annual event starting Feb 6 in Truro. It is an important gathering for Geoscience professionals from throughout Atlantic Canada.

**Canadian Geoparks Network (CGN)** - Cliffs of Fundy's Managing Director, Devin Trefry was recently elected to the CGN Executive as Secretary at their Annual General Meeting.

**Hike NS Winter Hike Series** - the first of three winter guided hikes led by Geopark staff took place on JAN 17 at Thomas Cove (Economy Loop). It was a wonderful day with 17 participants including locals and visitors from outside the region. The final hike will be held March 14 starting 1:00 PM at Cape Chignecto (Red Rocks to MacGahey Loop)

## FORCE Acquires Tidal Energy Platform for Sensor Research

*Tidal device to be re-purposed*

FORCE has acquired the former Sustainable Marine Energy floating tidal platform, the PLAT-I 6.40, for use in the Ocean Sensor Innovation Platforms (OSIP) project. The platform provides a highly capable structure - originally engineered for harnessing tidal energy - to serve as a foundation for next-generation monitoring and research.

Funded by Natural Resources Canada, the OSIP project is designed to advance environmental monitoring in the world's highest tides - featuring optical, acoustic, and fish-tracking instruments, allowing wireless data transfer, and integrating Mi'kmaw ecological knowledge to build a more complete picture of how marine life moves through the Minas Passage.

The PLAT-I is well suited to this work: a wide, stable platform designed for strong currents,

with ample deck space and existing cable pathways to support sensor systems.

"Acquiring the PLAT-I is an exceptional opportunity," says Lindsay Bennett, FORCE's executive director. "It provides an adaptable platform to test sensors side by side, it's already designed for the unique conditions of Minas Passage, and it offers significant savings over the cost of building new infrastructure."

The platform was purchased from Reconcept Canada, the principal investor in the former SME tidal project, and still an active developer with a 5-megawatt license at FORCE. The platform will undergo structural repair, coating, power-system integration, and a controlled relaunch from A.F. Theriault & Son shipyard in Meteghan River, Nova Scotia. The platform's first field trials are expected later this year.



Built for high flow science

The PLAT-I's structure is designed to hold a steady position in the powerful tides of Minas Passage and offers flexibility in mounting and testing of many different instruments, including environmental sensors.

"The PLAT-I advances monitoring at the FORCE site with the novel use and integration of sensing equipment in high flow conditions," says Dr. Anna Redden, director of the Acadia Tidal Energy Institute at Acadia University and a central research partner in the OSIP project. "It's an ideal deck layout for working collaboratively to test different marine life monitoring approaches and sensing technologies."

The refitted platform will serve as a shared resource for

Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy

researchers, partners, regulators, and technology suppliers, directly supporting the federal Task Force on Sustainable Tidal Energy Development's call for additional environmental data and collaborative monitoring approaches.

Adds Bennett: "It just makes sense: we're reusing a platform built specifically for these waters, instead of commissioning a new build. That accelerates our timelines to start this research, keeps costs down, and maintains safety and reliability - all in service of strengthening the science that underpins tidal energy decisions in Canada."

FORCE recently issued an RFP to design and install the onboard power system; more opportunities related to the project are expected over the next two years.



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## Cumberland opens 2026-27 Grants Program

The application process for the Municipality of Cumberland's grants program has opened. The municipality recognizes the important contribution that not-for-profit volunteer organizations make to the sustainability of its communities.

Last year, more than \$910,000 was provided to approximately 70 organizations in support of capital projects, facility operations, and community programs & events with the aim of promoting arts, culture, tourism, community services, and recreation.

The municipality is currently taking applications for the following: **Large Capital Project Grant** - for capital projects \$20,000 or over in total value; **Small Capital Project Grant** - for capital projects under \$20,000 in total value; **Community Program Grant** - for community-based programming and services; **Community Event Grant** - for community-based events, festivals and workshops; **Large Operations and Maintenance Grant** - operational support for larger facilities and **Small Operations and Maintenance Grant** - operational support for smaller facilities, community halls and museums.

The application deadline for these grant programs is March 31, 2026. More information can be found on the municipality's website: <https://www.cumberland-county.ns.ca/grants-to-organizations.html>

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