



These two photos supplied by Jim Harpell to accompany his Letter to Editor, (See page 4) show three unidentified people at an unknown location looking at the results of a clear-cutting operation. (Submitted)

## Fish Research Gets a Boost

The risk assessment program (RAP) for tidal stream energy is intended to create a detailed, credible assessment tool to gauge the probability that a fish will encounter a tidal device.

"That way, the risks are better understood," says FORCE science director Dr. Dan Hasselman. "We're building a tool to give us a better understanding of any potential risks to marine life in advance of turbine deployment."

RAP involves assembling the largest ever data set of fish distribution in the Bay of Fundy.

"Over the last decade, hydroacoustic receivers deployed throughout the Bay of Fundy have collected movement data from a variety of fish species carrying acoustic tags," says Dr. Fred Whoriskey, executive director of the Ocean Tracking Network at Dalhousie University. "These data originate from a diverse

series of separate research programs based in Canada and the United States, and our goal is to collaborate with all of the principal investigators to put them all together."

RAP provides an opportunity for an ecosystem-wide approach: connecting a diversity of studies with observations on everything from large predators (like white sharks) to small zooplankton filter feeders (such as alewives). The information from these fish tagging projects will help to assess potential impacts on animals at multiple trophic levels.

The work builds on existing fish monitoring work at FORCE: ocean technologists have already collected over 400 hours of hydroacoustic sensor data, running transects up and down the entire test site to measure the distribution of fish.

Says Hasselman: "Our turbine monitoring work remains

critical to measuring any potential environmental effects, but the RAP tool, using tagging data, gives everyone an early idea of what fish are doing at a particular site. We're coming at the problem in a whole new way."

Dr. Charles Bangley, a marine biologist working on the RAP tool with both MCG and Dalhousie University says: "So far, we've been able to add data on seven different species, including alewife, American shad, Atlantic salmon, Atlantic sturgeon, striped bass, white sharks, and Atlantic tomcod. We're also hoping to add data on American eel and spiny dogfish."

The list includes anadromous species, that move up freshwater rivers to spawn, like American shad, as well as purely saltwater, migratory species found mostly in the open ocean - some of which are culturally significant to the

Mi'kmaq and/or endangered, like the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon.

"The goal is species-specific risk assessment," says Joe Beland, fisheries advisor and marine biologist for the Mi'kmaq Conservation Group (MCG). "We're acquiring new acoustic tags and receivers for the study - our aim is to prep first the first round of tagging in spring 2021, and then follow-up for round two in 2022."

Adds Bangley: "Ultimately we're trying to generate a map that shows us where we expect certain species of fish to be."

RAP is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia. Key partners include Acadia University, Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy (FORCE), Marine Renewables Canada (MRC), Mi'kmaq Conservation Group (MCG), Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Ocean Tracking Network (OTN), and Dalhousie University.

## Council Joins Mentoring Plus Strategy

**By Maurice Rees**

On motion by Councillors Cooper and Johnson, Colchester Committee approved the Municipality becoming a supporting partner of the Mentoring Plus Strategy as result of invitation from Truro Mayor Bill Mills. The Mentoring Plus Strategy is a 4-year federally funded project that began in November 2019,

Led by Dalhousie University in collaboration with the Towns of Truro, New Glasgow and Kentville.

The Strategy identifies and engages volunteer retirees in

the community and matches them as mentors with youth, unemployed persons, those interested in changing careers, or businesses and organizations that may benefit from their skills and expertise.

The Strategy benefits seniors (55+) by keeping them active and contributing to their community in a meaningful way and is helpful to those who aim to enhance their employment. The Mentoring Plus Strategy currently has three Coordinators, one based in each of Truro, New Glasgow, and Kentville. The Truro office

is located within the Marigold Centre and serves Truro and Colchester County.

In an analysis staff met with Gordon Michael, Executive Director of the Mentorship Plus Strategy and confirmed there is no funding requirement of the Municipality to become a supporting partner. The main role of Council and staff would simply be to help promote the program within the community and work with the local Coordinator where possible to help it succeed.

The program would benefit local seniors by providing an

## Bible Hill Sets Budget and Rates

Commissioners of Village of Bible Hill have approved their 2021-22 operating and capital budget and have established property tax rates for the year. Village property tax rates will remain the same this year, with the residential rate at seventy cents (\$0.70), residential (limited service) at fifty-two and one-half cents (\$0.525), and the commercial rate at eighty-seven cents (\$0.87) per each one hundred dollars of assessment.

The rate decision marks the fifth consecutive year of stable property taxation from Village of Bible Hill. Commission Chair Kevin Kennedy remarked: "The Village Commission recognizes that, while Nova Scotia is fairing more positively than many other parts of Canada, there continues to be much uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. While costs of delivering services continue to rise, Commissioners have adopted a plan and set rates for the year that will deliver expected services, continue to advance our infrastructure renewal goals and save for capital

needs ahead."

Budget highlights include: \$2.5MM operating budget and \$694K capital budget; Renewal of sidewalk on College Rd (Vimy to Johnson) and at entrance to Bible Hill Recreation Park, as well as engineering design for multiple upcoming sidewalk projects; Funding to continue improvements to crosswalk lighting infrastructure - at the discretion of NS Department of Transportation and Active Transit.

Other highlight include: Construction of an accessible entrance, accessible washroom, and doorway improvements at the Fire Station at H. Douglas Boyce Village Hall (this project is made possible through grant funding provided by the Government of Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund); Efficiency upgrades to H. Douglas Boyce Village Hall through window and door renewals and HVAC control improvements;

Installation of new and upgraded security measures at Village properties; \$80K for new firefighting equipment

for Bible Hill Fire Brigade; \$100K for sidewalk and crosswalk repairs; Improving accessibility through installation of power door operators on Bible Hill Recreation Park washroom and change room doors and Continued strengthening of reserve funds to partially finance future capital expenditures were also included in the budget.

opportunity to remain engaged in the community by utilizing their skills and knowledge and making a fulfilling contribution.

A more detailed explanation of the program and benefits can be found online at: [www.mentoringplus.ca](http://www.mentoringplus.ca)

Mr. Michael also suggested that it may be beneficial to have the local Coordinator in to present to Council to offer a further understanding of local progress made in the program to date.

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