

The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

Province Announces Archibald Lake Wilderness Area

A new provincial wilderness area in Guysborough County will protect old-growth forest and animal and fish habitat. Archibald Lake Wilderness Area covers 684 hectares and includes old-growth forest, hardwood drumlins, lakes and wetland. Agriculture Minister and MLA for Guysborough-Tracadie Greg Morrow made the announcement on August 28, in Sherbrooke on behalf of Environment and Climate Change Minister Timothy Halman.

The new wilderness area includes three lakes: Archibald, McDonald and Rocky, which feed Archibald Brook, a tributary of St. Marys River. Nearly 300 hectares of the protected area is old hardwood forest, as defined by the Old-Growth Forest Policy for Nova Scotia.

The Province is currently consulting with Nova Scotians to help develop a protected areas strategy. The strategy will outline how the Province will achieve its 2030 land and water conservation goal and identify next steps. Nova Scotians can provide their ideas and feedback by October 6 at: <http://ns20by2030.ca/>

Low-Income Seniors Receive Tax Refund Cheques

The Province is returning almost \$17 million in provincial income tax to Nova Scotia seniors through its Guaranteed Income Supplement rebate program. More than 11,000 seniors who receive the federal government's Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) will get their provincial income tax back.

The program will provide eligible seniors a minimum refund payment of \$50 and maximum of \$10,000, depending on how much they have paid in provincial income tax. To qualify for this refund, a person must be 65 years of age or older in the taxation year; report income on line 14600 (line 146 prior to 2019) of their T1 return in the taxation year and have provincial income tax payable on line 42800 (line 428 prior to 2019) in the taxation year.

Seniors do not have to apply for this refund, but they must file a tax return each year. Those who did not file a return in this taxation year, but who are eligible, can still receive the refund when they file a tax return.

41 Projects Approved for Beautification, Community Works Programs

Town of Stewiacke and Colchester's Fundy Discovery Centre, receiving a combined \$35,000, were two of 41 projects selected in two provincial programs will help municipalities create beautiful, inviting spaces and provide opportunities for people to work in their communities.

Town of Stewiacke for its Beautify Stewiacke project was awarded \$10,000 through the Beautification and Streetscaping Program. Province wide 27 projects are sharing \$569,968 to enhance the beauty of communities and attract more visitors to local areas.

Municipality of the County of Colchester Fundy Discovery Center, receiving \$25,000, was one of fourteen projects awarded \$311,598 through the Community Works Program. The program creates job opportunities for youth and unemployed people to gain skills and experience in their fields.

Both programs are application-based and fund up to 50 per cent of the costs of eligible municipal projects to a maximum of \$25,000. 63 people have been hired through the Community Works Program since it started in 2019-20.

Province Seeks Input on Proposed Accessibility Standards

The Province is looking for feedback from Nova Scotians on the proposed built environment accessibility standard. The built environment includes human-made spaces, such as buildings, rights-of-way and outdoor areas.

The proposed accessibility standard focuses on new construction and major renovations. People can also comment on amendments proposed for the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations and Fire Safety Regulations, as well as new accessibility guidelines. Nova Scotians can provide their feedback at: <https://novascotia.ca/built-environment-public-review/>. The deadline is October 30.

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What do you call a hippie's wife? Mississippi.

Guardian

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News from our Federal Capital - Dr. Stephen Ellis

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Private Members Bill

Bill C-323, my Private Members Bill to amend the Excise Tax Act is under consideration in the House of Commons. I will have a full report in the November issue of the Shoreline Journal.

Briefly, the bill would eliminate the GST and HST for mental health services administered by psychotherapists and clinical therapists. Massage therapy may be added as an amendment. The next step is committee study.

More time for health issues

In the Fall Session, with the return of my colleague Jake Stewart to the Leadership Committee (I sat in for him during his absence), I will have more time to concentrate on health issues via the Standing Committee of Health (HESA), of which, I am the vice chair.

From the health perspective, we know there will be legislation around a national pharmacare program, that is projected to cost \$20 billion. There will be a study on women's health and natural health products. Regarding the NHP, we have had a tremendous response over the summer regarding how Canadians do not want price increases for non-prescription medication, and they demand a product freedom of choice. We know these products are safe, and adding further costs will adversely affect pocketbooks that are already overburdened from Liberal policies that limit the choices made by Canadians.

In addition, there will probably be a study on the opioid crisis that is Canada-wide, an epidemic that is not just found on the streets of Vancouver or Winnipeg.

Conservative Party youth

There was an incredible number of youth delegates attending policy sessions during the Conservative Party National Caucus in Quebec City. It was refreshing to see. Oftentimes, we believe that policy decisions are left to middle-age and older folks, and to see young people wanting to be involved in the decision-making process — and look forward to participating as either staff or elected members — is exciting.

This demonstrates the Conservative Party is moving in the correct direction, with a new base preparing to emerge as leaders for the decades to come.

Social affairs, health, and criminal justice panel

It was an honour for me, as a Member of Parliament for only two years, to have been asked to sit on this panel at our 2023 Conservative Policy Convention in September. We took many questions on criminal justice and social policy, MAID (medical assistance in dying), and the changes that are coming up in 2024 such as bail reforms, seniors' pensions, a multitude of questions about healthcare and how we can change the system, as we prepare to form the next federal government.

Isthmus of Chignecto

We are lucky that Hurricane Lee's altered path did not create havoc on Nova Scotia's only land connection to the rest of Canada. It is essential to speak forcefully about the immediate need for a

News from our Provincial Council - Tim Houston

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Because the government is funding these assessments, there is no cost to families and no one's spot on the waitlist will change. The only difference is people who need these important assessments will get them faster, so they can get care sooner.

A new mental health clinic also opened at Dalhousie University to provide care for people who have struggled to access mental health care, at no cost. It could be a model for future clinics.

You don't need to wait for a doctor's referral to get mental health and addictions care. You can find services at <https://novascotia.ca/mental-health-and-wellbeing/> or call the mental health and addictions phone line (1-855-922-1122) to speak with a clinician who can connect you with the right care.

federal government project that would raise the dikes, eliminating what amounts to a clear and present danger to our economy and ways of life.

The federal and provincial governments are arguing about a cost-sharing agreement for a dike-raising program that is estimated to cost \$650 million, taking ten years to complete. This is not the path to follow, in my opinion.

The Isthmus of Chignecto dikes restoration and heightening has been turned into a political issue by the Liberal government, and this is wrong. Time is of the essence. \$35 billion worth of goods and services are transported annually by rail and highway along this narrow link to and from the rest of Canada.

I appreciate the input from New Brunswick Senator Joe Quinn, who has tabled a bill that would invoke section 92(10) of the Constitution, which allows the federal government to take jurisdiction of undertakings that are in the national interest.

This has precedent. In 2014, the federal government paid for a new Champlain Bridge in Montréal, as well as a new international bridge from Windsor to the United States.

Senator Quinn's proposed legislation is called the 'Chignecto Isthmus Dykeland System Act'.

The key is to act immediately in a non-partisan manner, to ensure a safe and successful future, particularly for our constituents in Cumberland-Colchester and the entire Atlantic region.

On bilinguisme essentiel

Je suis de retour à Ottawa pour la session d'automne du Parlement. Le coût de la vie est notre défi majeur et la santé reste l'une de mes principales préoccupations. Je suis toujours disponible pour chaque électeur. Vous pouvez me contacter à stephen.ellis@parl.gc.ca

In the riding

I greatly enjoy keeping in touch with folks throughout Cumberland-Colchester. It helps keep me grounded to my primary responsibility of representing the people in our constituency. I had a wonderful visit in Westbrook with the Williams twins, Jane and Judy. A short time later, I dropped in to see Alta Fife, whose son was winding up the family's blueberry harvest for the 2023 season.

Blueberry producer Greg Smith was assessing the 2023 season, and he told me of rising costs of production that have seen fertilizer prices almost triple since 2020. Berry prices barely met the cost of production, Greg said.

Finally, a huge thank-you to Springhill's George Laird, for taking me deep into Cumberland blueberry country, to visit with people whose comments help guide my decision-making in Parliament.

I also thank George for organizing the Town Hall in Springhill, attended by more than 30 people, who came out on a miserable day. It was an afternoon session with well-presented dialogue, discussion about the cost of living, the Conservative Party's Blue Seal program, and what the future holds for the Isthmus of Chignecto.

Dr Stephen Ellis is MP for Cumberland Colchester. He can be reached at: 902-895-2863, or E-mail: stephen.ellis@parl.gc.ca

[cotia.ca/mental-health-and-wellbeing/](https://novascotia.ca/mental-health-and-wellbeing/) or call the mental health and addictions phone line (1-855-922-1122) to speak with a clinician who can connect you with the right care.

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We're making progress and we won't stop until this vision is a reality in Nova Scotia.

Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia can be reached at premier@novascotia.ca

Houston Government Invests in Local Trails

It will soon be easier to explore the natural beauty of Colchester North thanks to an investment from the Houston Government, Colchester North MLA Tom Taggart said on September 8th.

The following organizations will receive a total of \$11,245 to upgrade and ex-

pand the accessibility of local trails: Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre: \$7,861 towards replacing stairs, the boardwalk and signage and Tatamagouche Area Trails Association: \$3,384 towards the resurfacing of 3.7 kilometres of trail as well as general management along the

provincial rail bed.

"Our community's outdoor vibrancy is rooted in our local trails," said MLA Taggart. "The significant support we've provided showcases our determination to keep them inviting, safe, and open to everyone."

This local development is

among many across the province benefiting from the Recreational Trails Expansion and Trail Operations Funds. These initiatives support community groups, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations to develop new trails, expand recreational trails, and do capital upgrades to existing trails.

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