



Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy Director's Report 2020/21

The KCC Board of Directors continues to pursue our goals of acquiring and protecting lands on the Kingsburg Peninsula and thereby facilitating public access to our shoreline. In spite of Covid and a significant reduction in the population of Kingsburg over the past year, we have been kept busy with a number of projects and initiatives.

Community Outreach

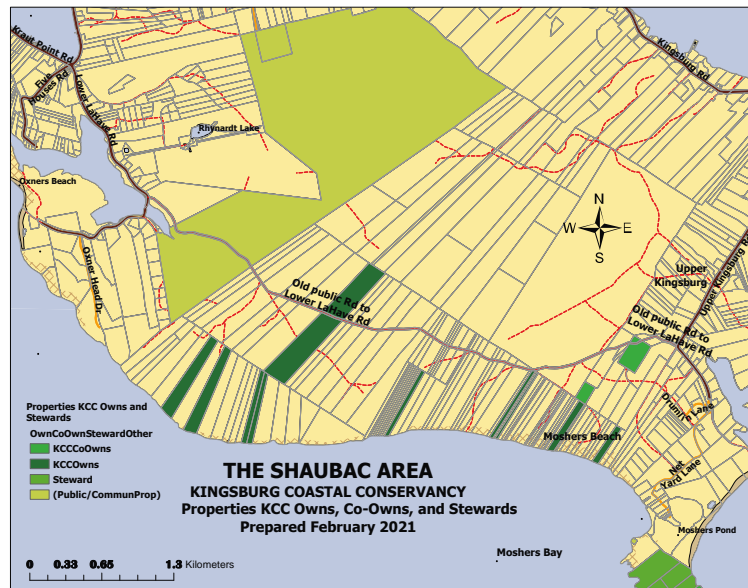
We continue to collaborate with the Kingsburg Community Association on our View Lot at the corner of Kingsburg Road and Hirtle Beach Road. This property provides an iconic view of Kingsburg as you reach the crossroads leading to our two wonderful beaches: Kingsburg Beach and Hirtle Beach. This past year we have removed some of the knotweed, put down topsoil, planted grass, established 5 raised gardens, and introduced three benches for visitors to rest, relax and enjoy the beautiful views that make the site such a welcoming stop in Kingsburg. We are thankful to Bill Gerhardt for his donation of equipment and labour in completing the initial stages of this project as well as his regular mowing of the grassed portion of the property. This is a 'work in progress' with a three-year time horizon and we are thankful to our joint KCA/KCC committee for their ongoing work.

The Nova Scotia Sea School was back on West Ironbound Island, having suspended their activities last year because of Covid. And, over the summer, the Board conducted a trial Artists in Residence (AiR) Program on the island aimed at assessing the creative potential and logistical challenges of an ongoing residency program on our island property. During the summer weeks, twelve local artists, ranging from visual artists to dancers, poets, printmakers, musicians and social innovators, spent a week on the island as a stimulus for creative pursuit. We are now in the process of assessing the logistical challenges associated with the trial and how best to carry the program forward to a successful launch next summer. We see this project as an opportunity to bring the island to the public through these many creative projects. Apart from the Sea School and the AiR Program, we continue to explore other opportunities in engaging the larger community in our work as a conservancy on the island and throughout the peninsula.

Our Properties

Last year we received a half interest in two properties in Upper Kingsburg which supported our longer-term goal of acquiring lands on the Shoughbac. Our hope has been that the unused public road between Lower LaHave and Upper Kingsburg will someday become a hiking/biking trail across the western end of the peninsula. This year we added to our Shoughbac portfolio of lands by acquiring two strategic properties – a 34-acre property intersecting the old public road and abutting two of our existing properties along the shore as well as a 9 acre shorefront property. This donation was made in memory of Albert and Frances Romkey and donated by Janeen Wilson, Ronald Romkey, Keith Romkey and Sharon Wentzell. Our land holdings now include 10 Shoughbac properties as well as two additional ones

that are co-owned by the KCC. More importantly, this new donation of lands provides the opportunity to directly access the shoreline from the public road across our KCC properties. These lands include mature forest and panoramic views of the LaHave Islands and estuary. We are thankful to the donors as this helps to reinforce our long-term goal of opening up the Shoughbac to walkers and hikers while preserving and protecting this unspoiled ecological gem.



With these new additions to our portfolio, we now own or co-own 46 properties and steward 23 others on the peninsula with a total of almost 410 acres. Because our mandate is the acquisition and protection of lands on the peninsula, our properties are now being linked to mapping software so that we can display those properties on maps on specific sections of the peninsula. We are continuing our work of linking information about the natural features of the properties and their acquisition histories. We had hoped to have an interactive map up and running this summer but this project has been delayed due to limitations in our human resources.

West Ironbound Island

Bald Eagles, Canada Geese, Barred Owls and a variety of Hawks continue to nest on the island. And, we have a healthy flock of sheep – 16 lambs and 25 mature sheep. As was forecast in last year’s Directors Report, significant renovations have been completed on the cabin. We installed new windows and doors, a new metal roof and a new deck. The water supply has been restored and we now have a modest on-demand water heater. Solar panels were donated and installed enabling enhanced self generated energy to power both AC and DC elements, thus enabling cell phone charging, computer use as well as capacity for the composting toilet and the refrigerator. All in all, we spent approximately \$45,000 updating and renovating this important asset. Most importantly, over the coming year the trails on the island will be brought up to fully passable condition with adequate signage such that circling the perimeter of the island will again be possible.

Gaff Point

With the pandemic still very much a part of everyone’s lives, Gaff Point continues to be a frequently visited area for those seeking a beautiful and safe outdoor experience. The reports and anecdotal comments of the Gaff Point Monitors indicate that many people are hiking the trails and that the number of those visiting Gaff in the past year are Nova Scotians who are first time visitors to the Peninsula. In early August, Gaff Point was featured in a Saltwire/Chronicle Herald feature, entitled “South Shore’s Gaff Point headland a natural marvel to explore”, as part of a series of pieces focusing on hiking trails in Nova Scotia and encouraging people to experience them.

This year, Gaff has been monitored by a dedicated group of a dozen volunteers who report that generally the trails continue to be in good shape and easily accessible for walkers and hikers. That said, due to Covid restrictions and concerns, routine trail maintenance has not taken place for two years. We hope to be able to get out there this fall to do some needed basic upkeep to the trails. This would include areas where foliage is encroaching and narrowing the trails and where trees and branches are overhanging trails. If you are interested in being a Gaff Monitor or helping with trail maintenance, please contact us or Bob Buckley, who coordinates our monitoring program.

Volunteerism

The KCC succeeds because of its committed membership and those individuals who offer to serve on our board and on our committees. One such individual is Noreen Channels who has been a guiding member of the KCC since its inception and over the past 26 years. She has been totally committed to our mission and has been a passionate advocate for the work that we do. She has been our bookkeeper, our archivist, our administrative support, our membership coordinator, our geo-mapper, our go-to encyclopedia of all things KCC. She and her family have also donated land to our organization which speaks to her commitment. She has now decided to retire from many of these responsibilities. We are forever grateful for her work for and commitment to the KCC.

With our dwindling numbers on our Board over the past few years, the loss of Noreen's support in so many important activities, and the exciting projects we have on the horizon, we are now faced with the proposition of employing someone to take on many of the tasks that she is now giving up. We do not yet know what a paid staff position would entail but we wanted to let our membership know that this is a consideration as we proceed forward. And, please consider serving on our Board or becoming a volunteer and engaging with some of the exciting opportunities that will be coming our way. You can make a difference!