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Survey Covehead Bay Review

We would love to hear from you. In the interest of planning for the sustainable use of Covehead Bay, the Rural Municipality of North Shore is conducting a review of Covehead Bay with the purpose of understanding the importance and impact which the various uses have on the overall environmental health, safety, social, and economic aspects, with the intent of creating a collaborative approach to shared use of Covehead Bay.

Available until April 24th.

* Required

What is your interest in Covehead Bay from a usage point of view?
How do you use Covehead Bay? Check all that apply to you directly
not what you think is important. *

- Recreational Boater (kayak, speed boat, sailing, winter sailing, water skiing, parasailing, etc.)
- Commercial Boater (Tourism operator - Kayak tours/rental, fishery tour, etc.)
- Aquaculture Fisher (Oyster lease, mussel lease or worker for this industry in Covehead Bay)
- Scenic viewer (you sit, bike, walk or golf and enjoy the landscape)
- Commercial Fisher (lobster, fish, shellfish, etc.)
- Recreational Fisher (smelts, sports, fly-fishing, etc.)
- Recreational General (swimming, biking, walking on beach, etc.)
- Tourism Operator (offer water activities to visitors to your establishment)
- Environmental Observer (Check Bay for health, scientific reasons, etc.)
- Educational Uses (Water Safety Education, Red Cross, Watershed, Etc.)

How important do you see the following for the current and future sustainability of Covehead Bay? *

	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Economical (commercial activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social (recreational and cultural activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ecological (Water quality, eco-system, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shared Resource Planning (MSP - Marine Spatial Planning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive Species Mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate Change Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coastal Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sedimentation/Pollutants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety/ Navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How would you rate the environmental health of Covehead Bay? *

- Excellent
 Very good
 Good
 Fair
 Poor
 Not Sure

What do you see as acceptable use on or around Covehead Bay? *

	Not Acceptable (Should be Limited in Area)	Some Activity Acceptable (Shared use for all)	Unlimited use with environmental considerations	Unsure
Recreational Boating (Sailing, speed, kayak, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquaculture (Mussels, oysters, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Recreational (swimming, walking, biking, golf, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism (accommodations, activities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial Fishery (Lobster, fish, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

At what capacity level do you view the following activities on or around Covehead Bay? *

	Unsure	At Capacity (No more expansion)	Some Capacity (More could be added)	Unlimited Capacity (Unless environmental constraints)
Recreational Boating (sailing, speed, kayak, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquaculture (Mussel, Oysters, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational General (swimming, walking, biking, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism (accomodations, recreational, commercial operations, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commerical Fishery (Fish, Lobster, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What are your thoughts, in terms of the current or future capacity of infrastructure within Covehead Bay? *

	Would like to see more	We are at capacity for our area	Unsure
Wharf Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marina Slips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bayshore Promenade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From your personal, professional or business experience what do you see as the existing strengths of Covehead Bay? (Adds to your enjoyment, economic or social benefit, environmental health and safety etc.) Check all that apply. Please specify under Other.

- Wharf Businesses (Shore Market, Tours, Restaurants, Fishers, etc.)
- Beautiful Water View
- Good Bay Health
- Multi-Use
- Good recreational options
- Good fishing options
- Other:

What do you see as the weaknesses of Covehead Bay? (that take away from your enjoyment, economic, social benefit, environmental health, and safety etc.)

Your answer

What do you see as opportunities for future uses of the Covehead Bay? If any.

Your answer

Please specify any concerns you may have about your use of the bay being impacted now or in the future (threats).

Your answer

Additional Comments - Anything you would like to say that we didn't ask? Here is your chance.

Your answer

What is your age group? *

- Under 18
- 19-44
- 45-64
- 65 or older

What is the highest level of education you have completed? *

- Less than grade 12
- Grade 12 or GED
- Completed some college or university
- Completed University or College
- Professional degree or Phd.
- Prefer not to answer

What area of the Rural Municipality of North Shore do you live in (seasonally or year around)? If in surrounding area please specify under Other. *

- Covehead
- West Covehead
- Greater Stanhope
- Stanhope Peninsula (Bayshore Rd to the Park area)
- Other:

Please provide an email if you would like any further communication of the study results sent to you.

Your answer

Please provide your name and community civic address to ensure input is from municipal parties only. (We will not share this information in the published review) If your name and municipal address isn't included your survey response will not be included in the review results, in the interest of being fair.

* Your answer *only 3 people from the fishing industry can participate in this survey, as they don't live in these communities. There are roughly 100 people who fish or are employed who don't have the opportunity to have their voice heard.*

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Environmental Sustainability Committee Update

Covehead Bay Update Meeting

January 11, 2017

Covehead Bay Mussel / Oyster Lease Issue

1. Objective

- Primary – prevent any off bottom oyster leases in Covehead Bay
- Secondary – negotiate 'best deal' for North Shore Community based on DFO commitment from Frank Quinn during Dec 20th meeting:
 - To open a dialogue among DFO, Leaseholders and the Community of North Shore.
 - There is an opportunity to look at 'options' and DFO is willing to look at a working solution for all parties.
 - Frank indicated that they were open to North Shore Community representatives coming back to DFO in the new year with further information around the situation with regards to the Social Carrying Capacity and Economic Assessment subject as this is a major concern for the Municipality of North Shore and it had not been addressed in the 2001 Environmental Assessment and could have a considerable negative impact potential on the Community.
 - Some indication that the 'current lease footprint' could be addressed as 'shared access' to the Bay for boating and recreational fishing is a major concern, however this requires input and agreement from the Fishermen and Transport Canada approval.
 - Look at Green Technology - Frank offered to check projects and the Innovation Fund and potentially run a pilot with fishermen.
 - Potentially get fishermen to look at 'underwater technology' for growing oysters.
 - Consider a modification of the current lease area and develop a plan to introduce oysters that meet the considerations and needs of all parties involved.

2. Risk Assessment on Current Situation

- High probability that DFO will not change any plans and will approve the off bottom oyster leases.
- Risk of this happening Tuesday Jan 10th as the PEI Aquaculture Leasing Committee meets and the oyster lease discussion and approval could be on that agenda.
- DFO ultimately holds decision on this matter (Province only looks at technical components of lease application).
- Chatter suggests DFO may be appeasing us on the matter and intend to approve some level of oyster leases in Covehead Bay.

3. Steps to Mitigate Risk (and minimize level of oyster cages in Covehead Bay)

- ESC continues to attempt to engage DFO in our appeal to not allow off bottom oyster cages in Covehead Bay (ie. instill a Moratorium).
- ESC has escalated the matter to politicians Wade MacLauchlan, Wayne Easter, Dominic LeBlanc – Federal Minister of Fisheries and other Provincial and Federal Government representatives.
- Next meeting request sent to DFO – attempting to schedule meeting for Jan 20th.

very good

RECEIVED
JAN 11 2017

Environmental Sustainability Committee Update
Covehead Bay Update Meeting
January 11, 2017

4. Building Our Case for next DFO Meeting

- Currently working with Barb Stevenson to build a case with regards to the Social Carrying Capacity and Economic Assessment subject that was not addressed in the 2001 Environmental Assessment and could have a considerable negative impact potential on the Community.
- Engaged Geoff Connolly from Stewart McKelvey (Barb Stevenson was out of the country) to provide advice and positioning prior to Dec 20th meeting with DFO.
- Subsequently building on Geoff's information with Barb Stevenson in advance of next DFO meeting. (continuing with Barb due to her experience in these matters and her connection to Stanhope).
- **Budget Update**

Budget Approved in Dec 7 th Council Meeting	\$2,500
Less: Budget Consumed (Steward McKelvey Invoice)	<u>(\$1,000)</u>
Remaining Approved 2016 Budget	\$1,500

Estimated Budget Req'd for Barb Stevenson	\$3,500
Less: Remaining 2016 Budget allocated	<u>(\$1,500)</u>
New estimated Budget Required for 2017	\$2,000
Contingency Budget Requested (only if needed)	<u>\$1,000</u>
TOTAL NEW BUDGET APPROVAL REQUESTED	<u>\$3,000</u>

Total Budget for Covehead Bay Issue	\$4,500
Contingency Budget Requested (only if needed)	<u>\$1,000</u>
Total Budget Required if Contingency Consumed	<u>\$5,500</u>

5. Next Steps

- DFO – obtain Moratorium on any oyster leases being placed in Covehead Bay.
- DFO – next meeting currently being established with DFO to 'negotiate deal' targeted for Jan 20th.
- Barb Stevenson – finalize our "CASE" around the Social Carrying Capacity and Economic Assessment subject that was not addressed in the 2001 Environmental Assessment (to be presented at the next DFO meeting).

- END -

- Municipal Affairs update – Municipalities Act Amendment -Council will vote on the budget items not the community as in the past.
- Kevin Dennis was the winner for 2016 Water testing contest, no response from the wastewater winner
- Summer student funding 2016 report completed payment expected soon
- Covehead Bay Oyster Lease Correspondence is being tracked
- Donation Policy has been completed (see attached)
- Connect to Innovate- Federal Government initiative for high speed internet in rural communities (see attached document)

The donation policy will be sent out to council for a review and Connect to Innovate will be explored in more detail.

5.3 EMO Committee:

Councillor Rae reported that the committee is finalizing the team lead positions. The committee will be meeting with Red Cross personnel regarding EMO partnerships with Red Cross. Councillor Rae will be attending the next York Community Council meeting.

5.4 Planning Board:

Councillor Ellsworth reported 48 permits were issued in 2016

5.5 Environmental Sustainability

Councillor Egan and Councillor MacLean updated Council on the request to have DFO put a moratorium on changing the existing mussel leases in Covehead Bay to off bottom oyster leases. The committee has spent a great deal of time and effort working toward this goal. The committee met with DFO on December 20th 2016 and at that time DFO was open to working with the community on the lease issue and suggested that there may be options to find a solution for all parties involved. Although DFO scientists dismissed concerns regarding the Environment or the requirement of an Environmental Assessment of the possible lease changes.

Before the last DFO meeting the Committee engaged Jeff Connolly with the law firm Stewart McKelvey to provide advice and positioning for the meeting. The committee has since engaged Barb Stevenson due to her experience and connection to Stanhope to prepare for the next requested meeting with DFO.


The committee will continue to push for a moratorium based on the Social Carrying Capacity and Economic Assessment subject that was not addressed in the 2001 Environmental Assessment.


NSSC Environmental Sustainability Committee Report – July 11, 2017

Committee: Chair – Connie Egan, Vice Chair - Kent MacLean, Eric Ellsworth and Justin Walsh

1. Covehead Bay Sub-Committee - Conversion from Mussel to Oyster Lease

- a. **Transport Canada Navigational Assessment:** Transport Canada technical component of the Covehead Bay navigational assessment was completed in June and the Municipal Information package was submitted last week. This included feedback from recreational and commercial boaters about navigation on Covehead Bay.
- b. **DFO Meeting:** The new DFO Acting Area Director John Coleman met with Kent MacLean on behalf of the Covehead Bay Sub Committee to do a knowledge transfer regarding Covehead Bay and Municipal concerns. We are to resend our unanswered questions to DFO and he guaranteed response.
- c. **Aquaculture Leasing Policy Review:** No new information on this. As noted earlier, a January 11th, 2017 letter to the Premier from the Acting DFO Area Director, Lori Cuddy, indicated that they would welcome input from Stakeholders as part of the PEI Aquaculture Leasing Policy review and that "one of the key areas of the policy review is recommendations to maintain and enhance public trust". We had asked to meet with the Aquaculture Leasing Policy Committee Chair to get a better understanding of the consultation process and how the Municipality of North Shore might participate. This request for a meeting was turned down by the Aquaculture Leasing Policy Committee and cited as inappropriate. It remains unclear who, if anyone, is giving input into this review on behalf of community representatives - municipal government stakeholders.

- 
- d. **Meeting with Wade MacLauchlan, July 6th, 2017:** The Covehead Bay Committee members (Councillors MacLean, Egan and Watts), Chair Gordie Ellis and committee resident and legal advisor Barb Stevenson met with Wade primarily in his role as MLA for area but also as Premier of the Province to provide an update regarding Covehead Bay.



Wade informed us that there is a Bay Review underway. The committee responsible for this has a provincial representative on it. The province is encouraging that Covehead Bay be on the roster for review of the physical and social impacts of aquaculture.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

He is now aware that the Community of North Shore is interested in putting a Bay Management Plan in place and understands that we want to work with other Stakeholders in completing the plan. He acknowledged that the single greatest risk to the community is "for the Bay to go".

He noted that the Community of North Shore has been proactive in having a vision for the Community through the development of the Community's Official Plan and Strategic Plan and informed us that this is the second fastest growing community in the province.

He is willing to attend a public meeting on July 26th, 2017.

e. Public Meeting:

- Scheduled for July 26th, 2017
- The Agenda is being developed and a meeting with a professional facilitator is set for Thursday, July 13th.
- Invitations will go out to local MLA, MP, DFO Area Director, Provincial Gov't reps, Aquaculture Producers and other stakeholders.



f. Covehead Bay Management Plan: work is underway to seek funding to support development of the Plan.

g. Covehead Small Wharf: Council agreed at the last meeting to have a letter go from Council Chair to DFO indicating an expression of interest if and when DFO divest of the Covehead Bay small wharf – we would like to have first option to consider. A letter was sent to Baron Delaney- Area Manager-Small Craft Harbours- DFO who is responsible for the divesture program.

2. 2017 Water Sewer Education Program – June 2017

- Reminder letters and educational posters went out to community residents in late June about the importance of properly maintaining their water and sewer systems.
- Water and septic protection and conservation information is on the community website and in newsletter notices.
- Supply of water testing kits at the Community Centre for pick up.
- Septic Cleaning Reminder Service and the Water/Sewer Issue Tracking will continue to be updated as information from residents comes in – this is to help notify the community office if trends might be occurring.

Council Report

NSCC Environmental Sustainability Committee

December 13, 2017

- **Covehead Bay:** The Covehead Bay Special Committee Terms of Reference remains on hold until Federal and Provincial support is clarified.
- A follow-up meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 4 with DFO PEI Acting Area Director John Coleman and Chris Mills, DFO officer (responsible for Bay by Bay Management Plans) to get more detail on the Bay by Bay Management Review, what will be examined and how the municipality, stakeholders and the public can participate in the consultation process. Kent MacLean, Connie Egan and Gordon Ellis and Jonathan MacLean attended on behalf of Council but DFO failed to attend -- John Coleman was out due to illness. We are in the process of scheduling another meeting. It was originally anticipated that this work would begin in December.

Pat Murphy



- A meeting was held with Minister Pat Murphy and Deputy Minister John Jamieson, Provincial Department of Rural and Regional Development on Tuesday, December 5. Attended by Gordon Ellis, Kent MacLean, Jonathan MacLean and Connie Egan to discuss potential funding to assist with Community Development and Sustainability.

After exchanging information, we were given a contact name to consider applying for a Community Development Program which provides support and guidance for communities to enhance the quality of life for rural Prince Edward Island residents.

Subsequent to this meeting, we have received information from Community Development Officer Chris Blaisdell and prepared the following for Council consideration:

Request for Community Development Program Funding

Background:

The Department of Rural and Regional Development has a Community Development Program designed to enable non-governmental organizations and municipal governments to access funds for strategic economic projects, regional support projects, and community capacity building which assists in strengthening and sustaining rural communities.

Eligible applicants need to contribute 50% of the total project cost. Financial assistance is in the form of a non-repayable contribution normally to a maximum contribution of 50% or \$25,000 of total eligible costs.

The North Shores Community Council's (NSCC) Environmental Sustainability Committee recommends the Community of North Shore submit a project application and proposal to secure expertise to achieve the following:

Overall Goal:

To assist in strengthening and sustaining the Community of North Shore from an economic and community capacity building perspective.

Objectives:

- Define potential issues and gaps around the upcoming DFO Covehead Bay Review and strategies the NSCC will need to consider contributing to the Covehead Bay Sustainability Plan.
- Address an identified gap in the existing NSCC 2014 Official Plan by examining the strategic importance and impact of Covehead Bay in building and sustaining key tenants such as:
 - Environmental sustainability and stewardship
 - Access to and promotion of recreational activities
 - Commercial business development where it fits with the official plan and NSCC's 5-year strategic plan
 - Tourism development
 - Community Growth – tax base growth by offering an attractive Community to reside and visit

This would involve subject matter experts and key stakeholders to assist in identifying issues, define solutions and outline a sustainability plan for each of the community pillars.

- Investigate the Environmental health of the Covehead Bay by researching available data, engaging appropriate key stakeholders such Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Parks Canada and Friends of the Bay to transfer knowledge, examine next steps to protect and sustain Covehead Bay for residents, stakeholders, visitors and future generations.

The funds would be utilized to contract a skilled program coordinator and the experienced experts in key identified areas of the plan.

Projected cost: \$15,000 Provincial and matched funding of up to \$15,000 Municipality of North Shore.

Additional ESC Priorities Update:

Healthy Water

- **Volunteer Water Testing and Reporting of Results** – the prize draw will be completed the end of December for all those who reported on water testing. Prize will be a free testing at time of choice.
- **Provincial Government Safe Water Tracking System** – Jonathan is working on getting more information on what can be provided to the Community.

Community of North Shore
2120 Covehead Road
Rte #25,
York, PEI C0A1P0



Dear Residents of the Community of North Shore,

This is for your immediate attention to advise you of significant proposed changes to the existing mussel leases in Covehead Bay. The current owners of the 92-acre mussel lease on Covehead Bay have submitted an application to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to convert 21 acres of mussel leases to an 'off bottom' oyster lease. They have confirmed informally that the plan is to eventually convert the entire 92-acre lease to 'off bottom' oyster cultures using black surface oyster cages.

The image below is a stark visual (*only 3-4 acres depicted here*) of what we may end up having in Covehead Bay. However, we risk 92 acres of these black floating oyster cages covering a great portion of Covehead Bay rendering it unusable for any other activity or navigation and with no consultation or influence for the potential of the acreage to grow.



Figure 1 - Suspended culture in Foxley River, PEI



Recent meetings between North Shore Community Council representatives and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) on this matter have confirmed that DFO has sole jurisdiction over the use of the Bays on Prince Edward Island. DFO's position is that a change from mussels to oysters is not considered 'significant' in nature and there is no requirement for any public consultation, an updated Environmental Assessment or any Navigation Assessment by Transport Canada. DFO stated there was a public consultation completed in 2001 that consisted of one notice in local newspapers asking residents to respond if they had any concerns about the mussel leases from an environmental or navigational boating perspective.

This position taken by DFO is very disappointing as the Community of North Shore is very concerned with the pending changes to the existing mussel leases in Covehead Bay from an Environmental, Navigational, Recreational and Community Economic perspective. While we recognize the Covehead Bay is a federal jurisdiction, it is at the very center of the Community and there should be consultation with the Community that the leases affect. We feel these changes will have a very negative long term effect on our growing Community.

Our position is that there needs to be a 'fair and balanced' sharing and access of Covehead Bay between shellfish fishermen (Aquaculture Producers) and the Community's needs. The change from mussels to 'off bottom' oysters using black surface cages in our opinion constitutes a 'significant' change to the Covehead Bay.

The Community of North Shore could be negatively impacted by the change from mussel leases to off bottom oyster leases in the following ways:

1. Environmental Impact

- Unknown environmental impact in the change from the current mussel leases to off bottom oyster leases (The last environmental study was conducted in 2002).
- Unknown current effect on Covehead Bay as studies available are now 14 -15 years old and the validity of those studies for the 'current conditions' is questionable.
- There are noticeable negative changes occurring in the Bay (*the loss of rock crab as a species, the negative growth of eel grass, the introduction and growth of invasive species, frequent and severe anoxic events etc.*) that need to be investigated.
- The unknown effect of oysters from other regions being introduced to Covehead Bay.

2. Navigational Waters Impact for Boating

- Small boats can currently navigate in and around the mussel leases. Off bottom oyster leases are floating containers that will severely limit the navigation of the lease area effectively eliminating the ability to navigate a significant portion of the Bay.
- Recreational Boating - further limitation to sail boats, kite boarders, kayakers, paddle boarders, motor boats and any other pleasure craft that cannot access a large portion of Covehead Bay.

3. Recreational and Commercial Fishery

- Potential negative impact to other aquatic species migration through the Bay and living in the Bay and the impact, access and restriction to Recreational and other Commercial fishers in the Bay.

4. Potential Negative Impact on Tourism Marketing

- Tourism operators promote Covehead Bay as part of their 'tourism experience' and a large portion of Covehead Bay will be inaccessible to recreational boating with 'off bottom' oyster leases.
- This will also have a substantial negative impact on the 'scenic and visual beauty' of Covehead Bay from the Bayshore Road drive and Pedestrian promenade. The Community has made a significant capital investment to build and maintain the promenade and as noted, this is adored by visiting tourists and PEI residents alike that travel specifically to enjoy the scenic environment and views along this route.

Community of North Shore
2120 Covehead Road
Rte #25,
York, PEI C0A1P0



5. Potential Economic Loss for Community

- Potential decrease or stagnation of property values surrounding Covehead Bay as the negative impact of 'off bottom' oyster leases settle in and the area becomes less attractive to buy and build seasonal as well as year round residences.
- Potential loss in market value of these properties to both seasonal and year round residents.
- A key tenant of the North Shore Community Strategic Plan is to help grow the tax base, promote tourism and business growth in the Community.
- Potential loss or reduction of future tax revenue for the Community of North Shore.

6. Limits 'shared use' of Covehead Bay by residents of the Community and visiting tourists

The North Shore Community Council has requested to DFO that a Moratorium be put on approving any off bottom oyster leases until such a time we can get a current independent Environmental Assessment, Social Care and Capacity Assessment and Community Economic Impact Study completed and a reasonable long term plan in place for the Bay that is acceptable to the Community of North Shore.

This matter is very time sensitive as there are meetings being held in the next couple of weeks where approval for the off bottom oyster leases may be approved by DFO. We are requesting your support for this Moratorium request.

Your voice needs to be heard if we are to have a real impact on this proposed significant change to the health and beauty of Covehead Bay.

Please contact your local MLA, *Honourable Wade MacLauchlan* 902-368-4400 or by email at premier@gov.pe.ca and MP, *Honourable Wayne Easter*, 902-964-2428 or by email at eastewla@parl.gc.ca to provide your support for the Moratorium and express your views and concerns on this important issue.

Can you cc our local email for the North Shore Community Council at nsccl@pei.aibn.com on any correspondence so we can appropriately track the issue?

Thanks for your attention and we look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Gordon Ellis
Chair of North Shore Community Council (NSCC)

CC MP Wayne Easter

CC MLA Wade MacLauchlan

CC NSCC – Environmental Sustainability Committee; Connie Egan, Kent MacLean, Justin Walsh, Eric Ellsworth

CC NSCC – Gerard Watts, Stanhope Councilor and Peter Vriends, Council Vice-Chairman



f-

The Guardian's Quick Question for April 26, 2018 (/opinion/the-guardians-quick-question-for-april-26-2018-156122/)

Two years in jail for P.E.I. man guilty in major cocaine case (/news/two-years-in-jail-for-pe-i-man-guilty-in-major-cocaine-)



Battle for the bay - North Shore fishermen say environment committee undermining oyster fishery

Mitch MacDonald (mitchell.macdonald@theguardian.pe.ca) (mailto:mitchell.macdonald@theguardian.pe.ca)

Published: Feb 15 at 5:56 a.m.

Updated: Feb 15 at 6:16 a.m.

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Fishermen Robbie Moore, left, and Dave MacEwen look over documents regarding the North Shore Community Council's upcoming Covehead Bay review. Both said the review is a waste of taxpayer money, as well as an attack on their industry. ©THE GUARDIAN - Mitch MacDonald

Oyster growers say the Covehead community council is undermining the area's aquaculture industry and using its own tax dollars to do it.

Robbie Moore, a lobster fisherman and oyster grower in West Covehead, made a presentation to the North Shore Community Council during a meeting Wednesday night and accused the group's environmental committee of promoting a "thinly veiled agenda against the aquaculture industry."

During a December meeting, council voted to apply for the province's community development fund which would see the province and municipality both provide matching funds of \$15,000 with an objective of defining "potential issues and gaps around the upcoming DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada) Covehead Bay review and strategies the (council) will need to consider contributing to the Covehead Bay Sustainability Plan".

"I have a major problem when my municipal tax dollars are being spent in an attempt to attack my livelihood," said Moore. "You are taking our very limited community tax dollars to try to take on the federal government. I can assure you, you've done nothing with our money but flush it down the drain.... If you want to take on the federal government, do that on your own dime."

A community meeting held last year saw concerns raised over aquaculture in the Covehead Bay, especially over the "off-bottom" oyster leases that are grown in cages visible from shore. There were worries over an application to modify a portion of the area's mussel leases to "off-bottom" oyster leases and how further aquaculture expansion could compromise water quality, sustainability and recreation on the bay.

It resulted in a group calling for a long-term management or sustainability plan from DFO.

Moore and other fishermen say the DFO has already researched the effects of aquaculture.

Resident Mervyn Misener, who is also a member of the Eastern Fishermen's Federation, said council was fighting a losing battle.

"Aquaculture is here to stay. I think this is just a waste of taxpayers money," he said.

Council chairman Gordon Ellis said he appreciated Moore's comments but said some of the information presented was new to council.

"You've made some comments that question the way we've done things, and I think councillors deserve a chance to absorb that and respond to that in due time," he said.

Moore had also said the ordeal had cost him money personally.

He said he had to hire a lawyer after a freedom of information request was made regarding his leases.

"Your agenda is now personally costing me money," he said.

Moore also said a small portion of Covehead Bay is currently farmed for aquaculture, while areas like Mill River and Foxley River are nearing full capacity.

"DFO is one of the most powerful departments in the federal government. By rattling their cages and bringing attention to the bay... you may actually achieve the exact opposite goal that you are looking for," he said.

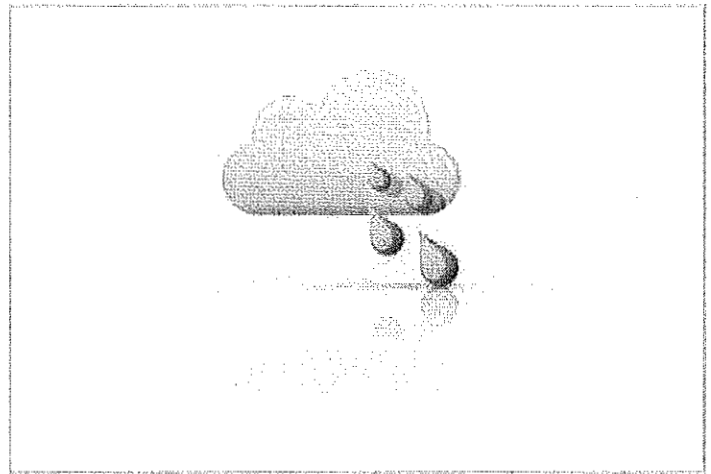
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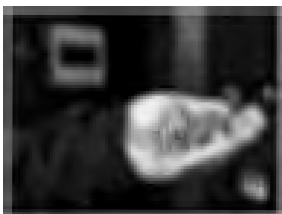
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'Covehead Bay is a jewel'

Maureen Coulter (Maureen.Coulter@theguardian.pe.ca) (mailto:Maureen.Coulter@theguardian.pe.ca)

Published: Jul 30, 2017 at midnight

Updated: Sep 30, 2017 at 3:24 a.m.

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Kent MacLean, a councillor with the North Shore Community Council, shows the area where the 92-acre oyster leases are located in Covehead Bay. MacLean said council is looking to development a Covehead Bay stewardship plan to help address growing concerns from its residents regarding the oyster leases and the future of this recreational bay.

COVEHEAD, P.E.I. - Jeff Lawley, a longtime summer resident in Stanhope, enjoys spending his days doing recreational activities on Covehead Bay.

"I'm the guy you see on the yellow sailboat every weekend on the Covehead Bay. When there is not enough wind, I'm the guy with his dog on his standup paddleboard. On top of all of that, I can be seen in a powerboat from time to time."

And when Lawley isn't on the water, he is sitting back and appreciating the "beautiful and majestic" vistas of Covehead Bay, he told the crowd of approximately 130 people at North Shore Community Centre Thursday, most of whom were there to share his concerns about the bay's future.

Lawley feels the 92-acre oyster leases on the bay compromise access since they is located on what he describes as the best and deepest water.

He also notes a "serious deterioration" in the bay water quality and depth since the inception of the aquaculture farm in 1994.

"I would be highly opposed to any further expansion of the aquaculture farm as it would render the bay useless for recreational purposes."

Many residents echoed Lawley's sentiments during a public meeting, hosted by the North Shore Community Council, to discuss the development of a Covehead Bay stewardship plan in an effort to ensure a healthy bay for future generations.

Coun. Kent MacLean said this plan would seek to address aquaculture fishing, commercial/recreational fishing, recreational boating and the rights of all residents, visitors and stakeholders that use the bay to ensure environmental and socio-economic sustainability.

"Our fear is that there is no controlled plan by DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans)," said MacLean in an interview with The Guardian. "We would like to have DFO participate and put a responsible plan in place for that asset."

So far, three meetings have been held between the Community of North Shore and the DFO.

"They've listened to us, but I'm not sure they heard us, and we are appealing to DFO to participate with the municipality in a stewardship plan for Covehead Bay."

MacLean said concerns from residents began in the fall of 2016 when black oyster cages began appearing in Covehead Bay.

The municipality learned from the DFO that it had received an application to convert a portion of the 92-acre mussel leases to "off-bottom" oyster leases.

"Their mandate is to grow the aquaculture economy on the bays," said MacLean. "Their lens is on the bays, it's not out to municipalities around the bays, but what happens in the bay affects the municipality."

MacLean said they are concerned about the environmental impact since there are many noticeable negative changes already in the bay, including the loss of rock crab as a species, the growth of eelgrass, the introduction and growth of invasive species, growth of sea lettuce and frequent and severe anoxic events.

MacLean said residents are concerned at the lack of a long-term management or sustainability plan for aquaculture leases on Covehead Bay.

"Stanhope, Covehead and West Covehead residents, which make up the municipality of North Shore, feel that Covehead Bay is a jewel."

The information gathered at the public meeting will be presented at the next North Shore Community Council meeting to discuss the possible formation of this Covehead Bay stewardship plan.

Malpeque MP Wayne Easter and Premier Wade MacLauchlan also attended the meeting and said they both support the development of this plan.

FACT BOX 1:

Just the facts

- The municipality of North Shore is the second fastest growing community on P.E.I.
- The last environmental assessment of Covehead Bay was conducted in 2001.
- An agreement was signed in 1928 between the Dominion of Canada and P.E.I. where it was agreed that the federal government would be responsible for aquaculture leasing on P.E.I. This agreement was reaffirmed in 1987.
- The owners of the existing aquaculture leases on Covehead Bay signed a new 25-year lease with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- P.E.I. is the only province that does not manage/control its coastal waterways.

FACT BOX 2:

Concerned residents

- The Community of North Shore has received more than 120 letters and emails from its residents regarding concerns of Covehead Bay.
- Those concerns include environmental impact, reduced recreational boating, no long-term management plan for aquaculture leases, restricted recreational and commercial fishing, potential negative impact on tourism market and decrease in property values.

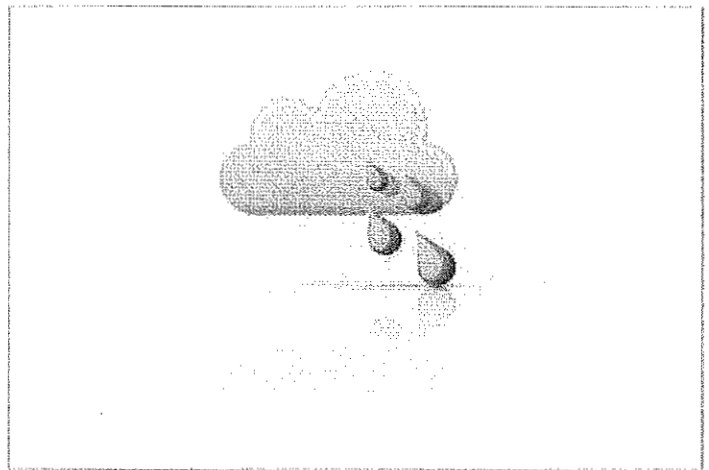
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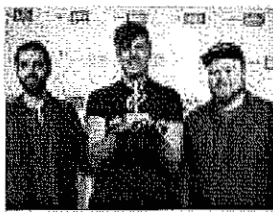
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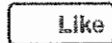
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North Shore community wants a say in the use of Covehead Bay

Residents concerned about long-term effects of aquaculture leases on the bay

Katerina Georgieva · CBC News · Posted: Jul 28, 2017 7:00 PM AT | Last Updated: July 29, 2017



About 130 people gathered at a public meeting at the North Shore Community Centre to discuss the future management of the bay. Kent MacLean, a community councillor, led the presentation. (Katerina Georgieva/CBC)

More than 100 people attended a public meeting at the North Shore Community Centre Thursday evening to discuss the future management of Covehead Bay.

The North Shore environmental sustainability committee, which is a committee of the Community of North Shore Council, wants to form a local stewardship group to develop a long-term management plan for Covehead Bay and to advocate that the municipality be consulted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada on future decisions affecting the bay.

"Part of the challenge is there is no plan in place for the management of aquaculture fishing in harmony with other interests, and those other interests could be other commercial fishing, recreational fishing, recreational boating," explained Kent MacLean, a councillor and the vice-chair of the sustainability committee.



North shore residents and stakeholders volunteer to speak during the public meeting. (Katerina Georgieva/CBC)

In the fall of 2016, the council began hearing from residents concerned about oyster cages appearing in the bay. The municipality then learned that some of the 92 acres of mussel leases on the bay were being converted to oyster leases, the committee explained.

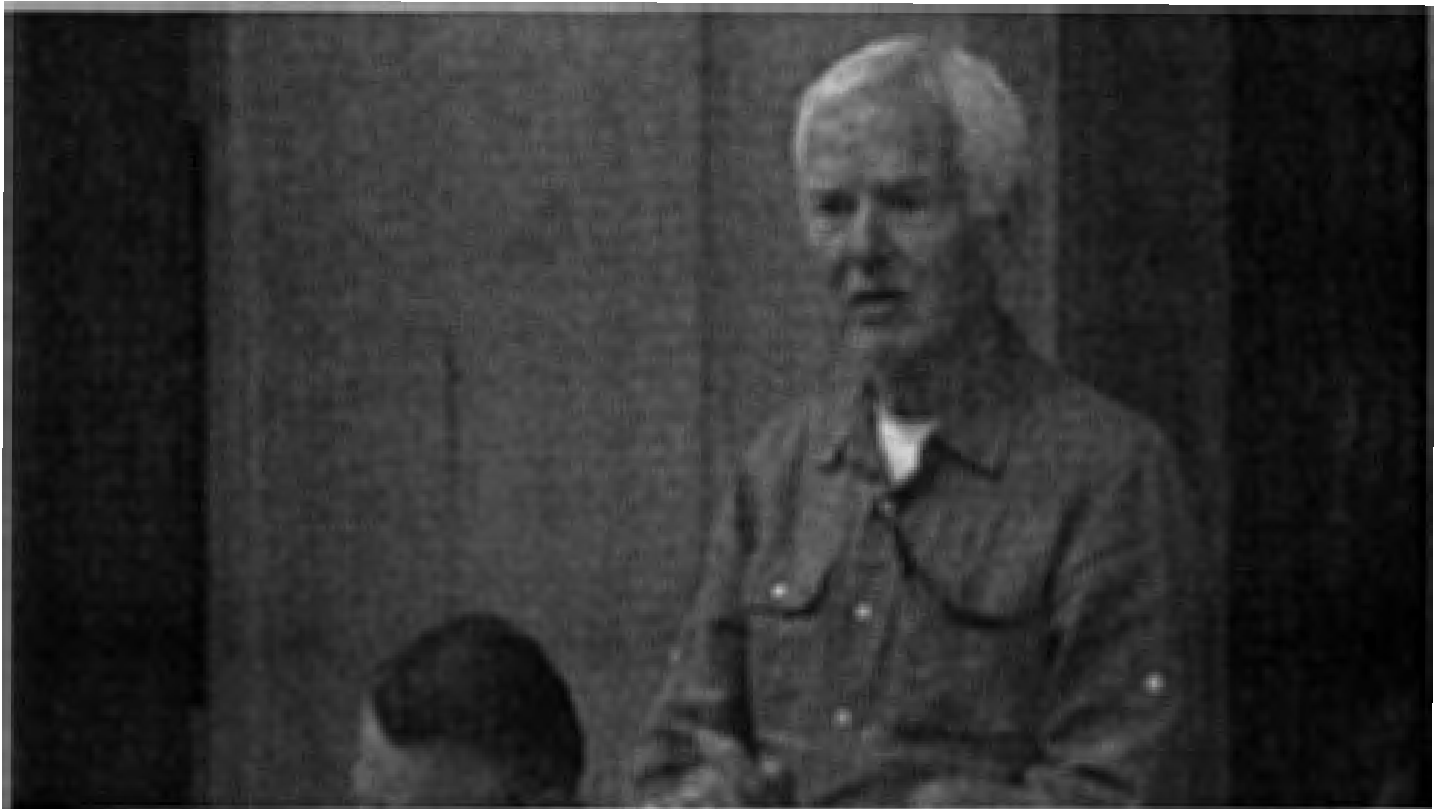
The Department of Fisheries and Oceans says four leases have been transferred from mussel to oyster aquaculture since this past winter, with no change in the amount of space taken up.

'The bay isn't just a bay'

The sustainability committee then held meetings with DFO, Transport Canada, the P.E.I.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and others in an effort to get an understanding of how the bay is currently being managed.

"This is not an issue of not supporting aquaculture on Covehead Bay or in the province of P.E.I. ... it's about building a plan, a sustainability plan, a stewardship plan for the bay so that aquaculture and the other elements ... can live in harmony," said MacLean.



'The bay isn't just the bay, it's part of Stanhope,' said seasonal resident David Smith. (Katerina Georgieva/CBC)

Some concerns expressed by community members included water quality, access to open bay waters, and the potential long-term environmental impacts of aquaculture leases on the bay.

"The mussel bed exists and the mussel bed is probably not going to be pulled out, but I think the idea that it could ... expand without any reference to the community itself, that's a bit shocking ... Because I think the bay isn't just the bay, it's part of Stanhope. It's part of the essence of what Stanhope is," said seasonal resident David Smith.

The DFO says it has "published peer-reviewed documents which conclude oyster farming

practices in Atlantic Canada have a relatively low environmental footprint."

'There has to be a collaborative effort'

There has to be a sharing of bay resources, said MP Wayne Easter, the federal representative for Malpeque.

"It can't be all aquaculture and it can't be all recreational and it can't be all fisheries. There has to be a sharing of resources and that has to be worked out," he said.

While he acknowledged that DFO is responsible for the water and not responsible for the community, he said the DFO should have a responsibility to consult with the community.



'There needs to be consultation with the community,' said MP Wayne Easter Thursday evening. (Katerina Georgieva/CBC)

"You know, you can't just come into a bay and DFO exercise its muscle if you want to call it that, or its jurisdiction," said Easter. "There needs to be consultation with the

community. DFO in and of itself may not have to do that. But the government of Canada has a responsibility to see that that's done, and I'll be pushing that."

He also added that the mussel farmers are just doing business, according to the rules.

"Some people are angry and frustrated to a certain extent with the lease holders that are operating in the bay. They have followed the rules that have been set out by DFO," said Easter.

"They've made a huge investment in terms of these oyster cages that they're putting out there, and their livelihoods are on the line in terms of this discussion as well if they're to be shut down, and I don't really think that's the answer either."

No one from the mussel industry spoke at the meeting.

'We feel encouraged by the support tonight'

Moving forward, the environmental committee that organized the public meeting will take the concerns of the people who spoke and present them to council. The committee hopes it will get the green light from council to create the stewardship committee for the bay.

"We feel encouraged by the support tonight. And again, we're encouraged by the number of stakeholders that spoke and supported constructing a stewardship plan. We'd like to have the aquaculture industry and the DFO participate in that. We feel positive that we have the support of the community and we will be moving ahead accordingly," said MacLean.

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