

ST. MARY'S RIVER NEWS

NOPE!

Archibald Lake off-limits to gold mining proposal

By Sandy MacDonald
SMRA



MLA Greg Morrow (left) pictured with SMRA president Scott Beaver and summer student Sadie Beaver during the Archibald Lake protection announcement.

The hard-fought battle against an open-pit gold mine proposal in the St. Mary's community has finally yielded a resounding victory. After almost four years of lobbying, letter writing, and community building by concerned environmental groups, the Nova Scotia government announced the Archibald Lake Wilderness Area as a protected ecological zone.

On a sunny late-August day in Sherbrooke, with the nearby St. Mary's River in the background, Agriculture Minister and MLA for Guysborough-Tracadie Greg Morrow, stepped up to a podium to make the formal announcement.

"The Archibald Lake area... is a beautiful, scenic and pristine natural gem," said Morrow to a crowd of about 50 supporters of the initiative. "By protecting it forever, we are ensuring generations of Nova Scotians will be able to experience and benefit from all it has to offer including the health benefits of spending time in natural areas."

That brief announcement signaled a major victory for the dedicated environmental and community groups that have opposed Atlantic Gold's (now called Atlantic Mining) proposed massive open pit mine on Cochrane Hill. With the rally cry of NOPE, (No Open Pit Excavation), the loose coalition of concerned citizens worked tirelessly to lobby government for the Wilderness Area designation.

For St. Barbara, the Australian-based parent company of Atlantic Mining NS, Archibald Lake represented an essential freshwater source for the mine. But the provincial government rebuffed St. Barbara eyeing the lake as a preferred water source. "Archibald Lake is identified in Atlantic Gold's description for the proposed Cochrane Hill Gold Project," according to a recent release from the province.

"The company's proposed use of Archibald Lake cannot be permitted within a wilderness area."

With Archibald Lake now off-limits, and other setbacks, the proposed Cochrane Hill project is dead in the water.

Continued on page 6

Highlights In This Issue

- President's Message
- Partner Reports
- Joe Fillion's memories fishing the St. Mary's

Board of Directors

2023 - 2024



The St. Mary's River Association is a charitable, non-profit organization providing leadership and engaging partners to enhance, protect and promote the St. Mary's River as a healthy ecosystem for Atlantic salmon and other native animals and plant species as well as a rich community resource.

Our vision: **"Health for the river, the Atlantic salmon and our community."**

SMRA News is a publication of the St. Mary's River Association as a service to our members.

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the St. Mary's River Association, the editor or the publisher. Memberships, suggestions and comments are welcome.

Address all correspondence to:
St. Mary's River Association
PO Box 179 Sherbrooke, NS
BoJ 3Co or by e-mail to
stmarysriver@ns.sympatico.ca
Registered Charity
89145 0975 RR0001

Publisher, Editor, and Design:
Newsletter Committee
Printer: Atlantic Digital
Reproductions Inc

President: Scott Beaver
Vice-President: Kenny Silver
Secretary:
Treasurer: Gwen Boutilier
Past President: Scott Beaver

Directors:

Alan MacDonald
Ralph Jack
George Sutherland
Rennie Beaver
Milton Gallant
Mark Dort
Sandy MacDonald
Elizabeth Jones
Edwin DeMont
Christina Boyer
Lanny Boyer
Brian Cox
Robert Robichaud
Allan Young

Honorary Directors:

Hardy Eshbaugh
David Sobey
Allan MacDonald
Donald Barnes
John Cameron

Thank you!

The SMRA would like to extend its appreciation to our retiring directors; Derek Whiteway, Robert Robichaud, Gwen Boutilier and Mary Gallant. Thank you to these dedicated directors for volunteering to serve on the board. We truly appreciate that you were willing to volunteer, and have valued your time and input.

Vision for a smarter future



SMRA President Scott Beaver navigating on his beloved St. Mary's River

By Scott Beaver SMRA President

Imagine a place where environmental science research meets a river head on; a place rich in biodiversity, wildlife, culture, and heritage. The St Mary's River is such a place. This past year we met major milestones in terms of environmental awareness and protections that have redirected much of our own community's thought process.

I believe we can build an alternate plan other than a large extractive industry in our small communities; a plan that aligns with today's climate crisis and one that will bring our community and river to the forefront using ideas with well thought out plans and actions.

What a year!

Increasing effects of Climate Change are affecting humans across the globe more and more each passing year and 2023 was a doozy.

Locally we have seen not one, but two seemingly mediocre rain storms turn into large water events. Around 10 inches of rain in 24 hours, both bringing up the St. Mary's River water level dramatically high and causing flooding. One can watch these events unfold, in terms of water level, via the federal website located in Stillwater. Here is the link:

https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/map/index_e.html?type=real_time

In March 2023 the St. Mary's River Association was awarded our single largest grant in our 45 years of operating history.

We have witnessed what coordination and passion can accomplish. That is, we witnessed Atlantic Gold removed from the federal environmental assessment process and Archibald Lake protected as a Wilderness Area!

Late in the 2023 season the province protected 16,617 acres of land in Guysborough County.

Approximately half of the protected land is in the district of St Mary's, the other half in the district of Guysborough.

One very important piece of land, which sat for years with i's dotted and t's crossed waiting for the minister to sign off on it was the Nine Mile Woods Wilderness Area.

This is the area in which famed photographer Nick Hawkins filmed the very well-known video of a female salmon on her redd and a male nearby on guard. This is the area where Atlantic Gold proposed a giant open pit gold mine and told me specifically that there were no salmon there.

Right above this new wilderness area Atlantic Gold's proposal would have seen a 130-foot high, 3 km long tailings impoundment holding back toxic material. They also proposed to release effluent into these extremely important salmon spawning grounds. I can't help but think "how absurd!"

2023 brought the Environmental Studies Research Fund (ESRF) Atlantic Salmon telemetry project to an end. We were fortunate to be asked to contribute to the project, and the picture the data provided has been groundbreaking.

This project has helped to shed light on where salmon go when they leave our rivers and head out to sea. Although we were a small part of this project, the St. Mary's salmon that were tagged and tracked made their mark!

Continued on page 4

Hard work paying off on river projects

Continued from Page 3

Behind the scenes in 2023 we almost lost our federal conservation project. Federal funding cuts across the board would have seen our unique Gene Bank and Stock Enhancement efforts completely slashed. These projects are unique because of our coordinated volunteer efforts with DFO and the specific work the federal team does, including a geneticist who implements the layout of this in-depth program. She literally treats our salmon like her children! It's a site that makes me very proud of our team's efforts.

I am happy to say that with hard work and lots of letter writing, we were able to save the program for another year. We are told that the program is now year to year, so we will need to work very hard at establishing a long term program for the years to come. Perhaps our program will become a model for others to work from. That may be our saving grace.

We have had many river adventures with groups taking part in everything from bug walks to salmon redd counting expeditions last season which is wonderful to witness. Our Museum Manager Megan Myers initiated a complete overhaul of our website and social media outlets which has made it easier to navigate and quite pleasing to the eye. We have also entered the virtual world of meetings with some new high-tech gear allowing us to hold clear and convenient meetings.

Now we can broaden our reach in terms of board members and speakers. This is something we previously couldn't do due to the inconvenience of distance.

We are also searching for members to join our team. Please reach out to me or a board member directly if you have an interest in serving with us. We sure could use new members who are willing to serve a term or two on our executive.



SMRA stock enhancement program returns St. Mary's salmon to the river.

I'll finish up with a few items you can look forward to in 2024. Our association has entered into an agreement with Alec Bruce, commissioning him to write a book. Something along the lines of, "A River Runs Through Us" capturing our story of the battle to protect this biodiverse and rich river system and much more! Keep an eye out for this one late in the 2024 season. It will be an interesting read and will make a wonderful gift and keepsake.

You can look forward to some much-needed signage around a few of our major salmon pools. As many of us know the regulations in terms of trout angling and closed salmon pools can be confusing. We will try to help address some of these information issues in 2024. We are working towards a trial blue tooth temperature sensor at pools, clear boundary signage, posted guidelines and fishing regulations. We want to help make it more inviting to folks who angle here.

Finally, I want to share with you a new possibility. This exciting new federal legislation is now emerging across Canada. It's called Ecologically Significant Areas (ESA's). It is a form of freshwater protection under the Fisheries Act.

Over the last year the federal team responsible for the Atlantic Provinces has been studying the St Mary's to determine if it could be a candidate river for this new designation. This process is going on across the country.

It's a proud moment for us here in Nova Scotia to be considered for nomination. Imagine a place where environmental science could be studied under the notion of climate change and biodiversity; a place where we welcome scientists, recreationalists, and like-minded individuals. Conjure up an image of what a designation of freshwater protection, the first of its kind, could bring to the area in terms of prosperity.

If we look at the direction the planet is heading, we can see opportunity follows the path of those who get on board with Climate Change mitigation efforts. A designation could follow a nomination and could mean new rules that we as a community would be able to sit in on from the very beginning of their development.

We could be a part of developing a framework that guides what ESA's across the country could look like.

I see an opportunity for our community to establish a new way of thinking and governing in an ever-changing Climate Crisis.

Heavy rainfall and swollen stream delay habitat work at Black Brook

**By Kenny Silver,
SMRA Vice President**

The restoration work planned for 2023 was to complete the restoration and bank stabilization of the Black Brook (East River St. Mary's) between the Highway bridge and where the brook enters the river. Black Brook is one of the most important and productive tributaries on this branch of the river and is a spawning area for adult salmon.

We had started the brook's habitat restoration in 2022 and hoped to complete it this year. However, there was a record amount of rainfall over the summer and the water level in the brook never dropped low enough to work in the brook without creating large amounts of silt.



Charlie MacInnes searching for salmon redds below Black Brook Falls last November.

We have carried our funding forward to this year and hope the water conditions will allow us to complete the work.

The section of the brook above the falls has been used by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans since 2016 as a rearing area for Atlantic Salmon. In the spring they stock unfed fry and allow them to mature to the parr stage when DFO Staff come back to recapture some and grow them to adults. These fish would then either be spawned in the hatchery or released in the river to spawn in the wild.

Even though we couldn't complete the work, we did visit the brook in early November and observed numerous salmon redds. It is always exciting to go out and see the wild Atlantic salmon spawning in their natural habitat. At other restoration sites we have observed an increase in salmon spawning activity, and we would expect this to happen at our Black Brook site as well.

This year (2023) marks ten years since we began doing major habitat restoration to the West Branch of the river. Over the last ten years we have restored much of the West Branch of the river above Caledonia and several important sites further down the West Branch of the river. We have also worked on Sutherland's Brook and limed some of the headwaters of Barron Brook.

In 2021 we started working in the East Branch at a site near Green's Brook, then did some work on Black Brook and Fraser's Brook. In total this amounts to almost thirty linear kilometres of the river and tributaries that have been restored.

Wilderness Area decision a win for environment

Continued from page one

The controversial mine project hit a major roadblock in 2022. St. Barbara's environment assessment of the proposed mine was terminated when the company failed to submit required information by deadline.

The Wilderness Area designation also prohibits any forestry activity in the Archibald Lake zone, though it has been decades since any large-scale forest harvesting has been undertaken in the area.



Scott Beaver (left) and MLA Greg Morrow unveil a map of the new Wilderness area.

“Large scale industrial activity, like giant open pit gold mines, have no business in pristine freshwater ecosystems,” says Scott Beaver, president of the St. Mary's River Association. “This designation protects an important freshwater system of St. Mary's for generations to come.”

A small area around the new wilderness area (about 10 hectares) is still subject to mineral exploration rights. Those rights, according to the NS Government, can still be honoured under the Wilderness Protection Act, providing “activities do not degrade the wilderness area.”

“We are so happy that this special place is now protected, and we thank the Nova Scotia government for their leadership to conserve this ecological hotspot,” said Chris Miller, Executive Director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Nova Scotia Chapter.

The Archibald Lake Wilderness Area now protects 1700 acres of old-growth hardwood forest, woodland, lakes and wetlands. Nearly a third of the protected area is the waters of Archibald, McDonald and Rocky Lakes.

The designation of the Archibald Lake Wilderness Area is in keeping with Nova Scotia's Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act, which aims to protect 20 per cent of Nova Scotia's land and water by 2030.

“Our fieldwork at Archibald Lake Wilderness Area over the past three years has identified 37 rare species, including seven that are listed under the Endangered Species Act.”



Joanne Louise Mailman

December 21, 1955 - March 22, 2024

Dear Friends and Family of the St. Mary's River Association, It is with regret that we inform you of the passing of Joanne Mailman, the St Mary's River Association long time employee and ardent supporter. Joanne had been with the SMRA Interpretive and Education Centre since its opening in 2001 until her retirement in 2017. She was an integral part of the SMRA team and will be greatly missed.

Nova Scotia Nature Trust comes full circle on the St. Mary's River

By Anna Weinstein,
Nova Scotia Nature Trust

Almost twenty years ago, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust set its sights on protecting the irreplaceable natural wonders that come together along the St. Mary's River.

Securing the future of critical floodplain and upland forest, islands, beaches, and other wildlife habitat is vital to maintaining the health of the river, and the very first property that drew the Nature Trust's attention to the region was a 450 acre parcel known as Crow's Nest. With over 1.5 kilometers of shoreline along the main branch of the river, securing this property would be a showstopping way to kick off a wave of nature conservation throughout the St. Mary's River watershed.

...Or it would have been. Since 2006, the Nature Trust has worked with private landowners along the St. Mary's River to create a "ribbon of green," but the ribbon wound itself away from Crow's Nest.

Until now!

In 2023, after two decades, we finally secured the property that started it all. Crow's Nest is now officially part of the Nature Trust's rapidly growing network of protected conservation lands. Thanks to land donors, community members, organizations like the St. Mary's River Association, and many more, the Nature Trust has been able to preserve over 2,230 acres of the river's wild legacy to date.

Crow's Nest includes a number of ecological features worth protecting.



Crows Nest East, part of the riverside parcel of protected St. Mary's wetlands

For one, it contains rare intact floodplain forest. In these part-time wetlands, floodwaters deposit debris and sediments along the river's edge. This material accumulates and gives life to a diverse array of species, some of which cannot be found anywhere else.

Floodplains hold and slowly release water like a sponge, improving water quality, mitigating flooding, and holding soil in place. They also create shade to keep water temperatures cool and comfortable for fish living in the river, including Atlantic Salmon. Floodplain forests are rare in Nova Scotia because their rich soil and flat expanses have historically made them appealing locations for settlement and farming.

Like much of our other protected land along the river, Crow's Nest also holds stands of old Hemlock. You may have heard the term "HWA" floating around Nova Scotia whenever the subject of Hemlock comes up.

The good news is that the forests around the St. Mary's River are not yet threatened by Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), an invasive insect that feeds on the nutrient and water storage cells at the base of Eastern Hemlock and eventually kills the trees.

The better news is that the Nature Trust is actively pursuing treatment plans to protect the Hemlock throughout our affected conservation lands, so when it does reach the forests

Continued on page 9

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. BOARD NOMINATIONS

The Annual General Meeting of the St. Mary's River Association will be held on Sunday, May 26, 2024 at 2 pm at the Exhibit Centre in Sherbrooke Village, Sherbrooke NS. All paid up members are eligible to vote at the meeting. Memberships will be available for those wishing to join or renew their membership.

In accordance with our by-laws, any member in good standing may nominate from the floor at the annual meeting a member in good standing for any or all of the open Executive and Director positions. Any person so nominated must consent to serve, either orally at the meeting or in writing presented at the meeting.

All are welcome to attend. Email info@stmarysriverassociation.com or mail to St. Mary's River Association, PO Box 179, Sherbrooke, N. S. B0J 3C0.



NEW TO THE AREA

HS SURPLUS

Discounted furniture, clothing,
food, small appliances and more

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday &
Saturday 10am to 6pm

32 SPROTT LANE
SHEET HARBOUR

Nature Trust “ribbon of green” now larger than 9500 acres

Continued from Page 7

along our beloved river, we will be better prepared to take action.

For the Nature Trust, saving land is just the beginning. We commit to protecting our conservation lands forever by maintaining an active land stewardship program.

Land stewardship is about caring for and managing our conservation lands while allowing nature to thrive, with the help of scientists, conservation partners, neighbouring landowners, and volunteers. At Crow’s Nest, that work will include ensuring the land is safe for visitors.

And speaking of visitors, we’re very proud that our protected land along the river also now includes the only barrier-free access point (wheelchair accessible) in the province dedicated solely for fly fishing, at McKeens Brook pool!

We are immensely thankful to the St. Mary’s River Association for their work in 2022 to make that access point available and usable for visitors. The McKeens Brook pool property, and one more, were secured at the same time as Crow’s Nest from the Historic Sherbrooke Village Development Society, who in turn received it as a generous community donation by the Oland family.

Our unique work in private land conservation is a critical complement to long-standing salmon, turtle and watershed conservation efforts.



McKeens Brook concrete pad offers barrier-free access to river for fly fishing.

Connecting hotspots of plant and animal life by preserving a contiguous corridor of intact habitat is essential to the long-term health of the river. The “ribbon of green” now encompasses a remarkable 9,500 acres and 52 kilometres of wild St. Mary’s Shoreline, including Nature Trust lands and provincial parks and protected areas, most recently the newly designated Archibald Lake Wilderness Area.

Saving habitat key to battling climate change

Protecting habitat is key to saving biodiversity and building resilience against devastating climate change impacts,

and there are positive, tangible ways every Nova Scotian can step up for nature. Owners of ecologically important land can explore conservation options. Volunteers can help care for special wild places across the province. And if you can – donate to save more wild places like the St. Mary’s River. Visit www.nsnt.ca to learn more.

*Anna Weinstein is the
Marketing & Communications lead
for the Nova Scotia Nature Trust*



Still searching for buried gold

By Sandy MacDonald
SMRA

After the long-awaited decision last August by the NS government to declare the Archibald Lake area an environmentally-protected zone, many in our community thought they'd seen the last of gold exploration activity on Cochrane Hill. But anyone driving through Sherbrooke in the late winter months would have noticed the distinctive white trucks of St. Barbara Atlantic in front of its Main Street offices.

The renewed street-front presence of the gold mining company was tied to new exploration drilling in February and March of 2024 in the Cochrane Hill area. Even though the open pit mine project proposed by the Australian mining conglomerate was mothballed after it withdrew from the environmental review process in 2022, the company has recently drilled a handful of deep holes to better determine the extent of the gold reserves in the area.

The diamond drilling program sank three test holes to a depth of 475 m beneath the wooded landscape of Cochrane Hill, testing for mineralization at depth.

The drilling process uses a diamond-tipped rotating bit to bore a cylinder of rock hundreds of metres below the surface. Those rock cylinders, approximately 48 mm (two inches) in diameter, are returned to the surface and organized in trays according to the order of extraction. By examining those core samples, mining technicians can determine the presence of gold in the quartz veins.



Drone photo of the diamond drill rig on Cochrane Hill. (courtesy St. Barbara)

Some of the samples from Cochrane Hill clearly indicated the presence of visible gold in quartz veining. Though the diamond drilling can be the most expensive stage of gold exploration, it provides a three-dimensional delineation of any gold deposit.

On a chilly morning in late February, two workers from the sub-contractor Logan Drilling were busy on the land-based rig situated less than a kilometre from the #7 highway in the Cochrane Hill area. Hoses running along the frozen ground were pulling water to the drill site.

The diamond bit drilling rig pushed pipe deep beneath the snow-covered ground, nearly half a kilometre down through the layers of rock. After the cylindrical core samples were pulled from the hole, they were crated and numbered.

Those samples were further examined and labelled in the Sherbrooke office, then trucked to a laboratory in Halifax for refined analysis of the mineralization.

The recent drilling activity falls within the mineral exploration rights granted to the company. St. Barbara must post a remediation bond that is not returned to the company until the site is inspected by a provincial regulator.

“St Barbara’s will continue its efforts to define the gold resource at the site of the proposed Cochrane Hill Gold Mine through exploration drilling,” said Eleanor Chisholm, Permitting officer for St. Barbara’s Atlantic Operations.

“It is important to note that the results of these exploration efforts will not change the regulatory regime or permitting timeline of the Cochrane Hill Gold Mine project.”

The mining company seems prepared to play the long game. Designing a new mining proposal and the extensive permitting process would take years. But the gold beneath Cochrane Hill isn’t going anywhere. And neither are the corporate prospectors looking to turn a profit from extracting that gold.

NSSA reports solid year for river work

By Nick MacInnis,
Nova Scotia Salmon Association

The Nova Scotia Salmon Association is pleased to report that 2023 was another banner year for our work in Atlantic salmon and aquatic ecosystem conservation. Across the province, through the NSSA Adopt A Stream program, groups restored 97,680 square meters of stream habitat and planted thousands of riparian trees. In the Southern Uplands, our work focused on the completion of watershed stewardship plans for 8 priority rivers, including the St. Mary's River.

These plans identify restoration priorities and will provide important information and guidance to user groups such as SMRA as they plan future restoration projects. The goal of the watershed stewardship plans was to inform stakeholders and community groups where restoration activities would yield the greatest impact.

For example, on the St. Mary's River, our plans enable us to determine which tributaries on the West Branch would see the most improvement in salmon rearing potential if we addressed the issue of low pH. Because we live in a world of finite resources it is important that large scale and expensive projects such as land-based liming or the construction of a lime dozer are conducted where they will create the most benefit. We are looking forward to presenting these plans to SMRA beginning in April.

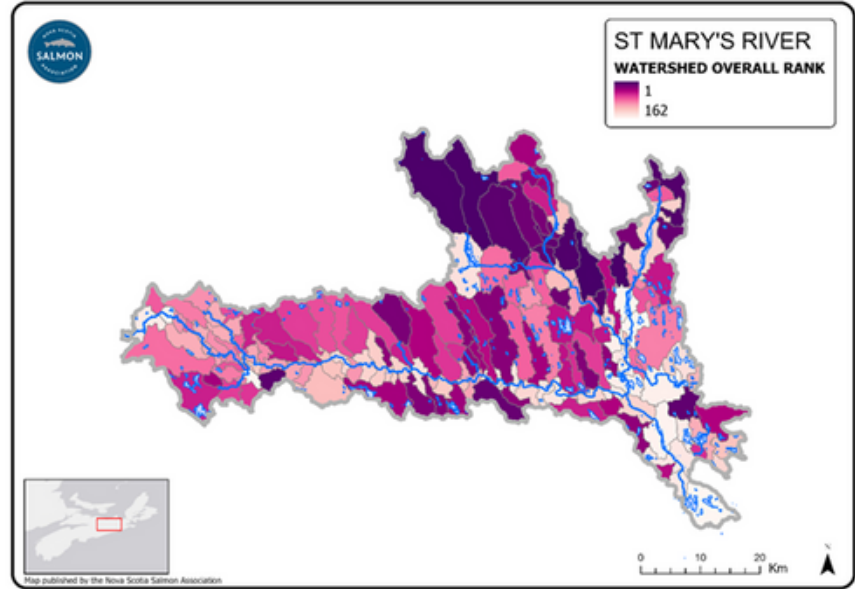


Figure 1: Map of Planning units with ranking of overall habitat quality (darker tones represent healthier habitat).

Looking ahead into 2024, NSSA is embarking on a new chapter as a Atlantic salmon conservation champion and collaborator. As the readers of this newsletter are aware, there are vast challenges and threats facing Atlantic salmon, and at the top of the list are four key threats: habitat degradation, habitat connectivity, acidic waters and increasing water temperatures.

To address each of these challenges head-on, NSSA has devoted resources and secured support from the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species At Risk and the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Fund. These efforts will expand our habitat restoration and fish passage connectivity work. We've also launched an exciting new program aimed at addressing the legacy impacts of acid rain.

To address issues related to water temperature we are working with industry and academic partners to further develop cold-water refugia restoration, which is supported by new technologies such as thermal imaging drones.

We are excited to be working in partnership with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources along with our affiliates and community partners to undertake impactful conservation action.

Continued on page 12



Removal of concrete barrier in West Branch priority for Adopt a Stream/NSSA project



Photo Left: PHD Candidate Kathryn Smith flying NSSA's thermal drone during her recent work term with NSSA.

Continued from Page 11

On the roster of Adopt A Stream – supported projects this year is the removal of a large concrete structure on the lower West Branch St Mary's. The structure's origins likely date back to the late 1960s when DFO operated a fish fence at the site.

This 10-meter-wide structure lies across the entire streambed from streambank to streambank and unfortunately over time has created several issues such as the widening of the channel downstream and the creation of a split channel upstream.

This structure also acts as a 'heat sink' during the summer months and is likely increasing the water temperature for several hundred meters downstream.

During the summer months when flow levels are dropping the depth of water flowing over the structure becomes very shallow and is most

likely preventing juvenile Atlantic salmon and Brook trout from migrating upstream to cooler headwater reaches when they need it most. Removing this structure will be a significant project and we look forward to assisting SMRA's restoration team as they complete the project.

As always the team at NSSA looks forward to collaborating with SMRA and its membership in the year ahead and we encourage anyone interested in learning more about our organization and what we do to get in touch with us!

Nicholas MacInnis is the Habitat Restoration Manager for the Nova Scotia Salmon Association



SHERBROOKE GARAGE LTD.

8152 MAIN ST.
SHERBROOKE
PH. 902-522-2881
FAX: 902-522-2276

SMRA president honoured at annual ASF dinner in Halifax

ATLANTIC SALMON FEDERATION
& THE NOVA SCOTIA SALMON ASSOCIATION'S


33rd Annual
**HALIFAX
DINNER**

THURSDAY APRIL 25, 2024
CANADIAN MUSEUM OF
IMMIGRATION AT PIER 21



6:00 PM
RECEPTION & SILENT AUCTION

7:30 PM
DINNER & LIVE AUCTION

ONLINE BOOKINGS:
www.asf.ca/events
RSVP ASF (Envelope Enclosed)
800-565-5666 – events@asf.ca



SCOTT BEAVER
ASF and the NSSA will be paying special tribute to Scott for his ongoing commitment to wild Atlantic salmon.

**By Deirdre Green,
Atlantic Salmon Federation**

Members and friends of the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) and the Nova Scotia Salmon Association (NSSA) have generously supported our efforts to conserve and protect our most iconic species, the wild Atlantic Salmon, at our Annual Halifax Dinner for the past several years.

On Thursday, April 25th we are bringing together these supporters for another lively evening of camaraderie and celebration. This year we are thrilled to be paying special tribute to Scott Beaver, president of the St. Mary's River Association, for his ongoing commitment to both organizations and to wild Atlantic salmon.

What Scott and the St. Mary's River Association have accomplished along this vast watershed is a testament to the power of volunteerism. Through your impactful advocacy, dedicated fieldwork, and restoration efforts, the St. Mary's River and the salmon who call it home, continue to garner support and meaningful protections, including the Archibald Lake Wilderness Area.

On behalf of the entire Dinner Committee, we hope you can join us on April 25th as we honor Scott's exemplary work and passion for conservation.

In living colour



Clockwise from above left: SMRA Director Elizabeth Jones releases salmon fry with the grade 4/5 students from SMECA as part of the Fish Friends Program; Milton Gallant, Director, St. Mary's River Association, Greg Morrow, Eastern Shore MLA and Minister of Agriculture, Tim Halman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Patt Dunn, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism, & Heritage, and Scott Beaver, President, St. Mary's River Association; Scott Beaver receiving an art photo by SMRA director George Sutherland in recognition of Scott's work with the River Association; Examining bugs during our bug walk, led by Randy Lauff; Attendees of the SMRA-led workshop laying out trees for riparian zone enhancement.



Edwin Demont



Edwin Demont





Left: DFO technician preparing St. Mary's River salmon, raised in the Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility, for fall release in the Main Branch; Above: StFX Biologist Randy Lauff with SMRA summer students Patrick McGinn and Sadie Beaver.

Sherbrooke Waterfront Developments Inc.

P.O. Box 150, 8073 Hwy. #7, Sherbrooke, NS
BOJ 3C0 email: waterfront@bellaliant.net
(T) 902.522.2791 (C) 902.328.4338

Habitat degradation and barriers to access putting squeeze on DFO salmon program



Hatchery-raised salmon fry are “wild exposed” in Chisholm Brook (above).

By Anna MacDonnell
Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ St. Mary’s River conservation intervention program functions as a modified breeding and rearing program for Atlantic salmon, designed to mitigate the loss of genetic diversity and prevent extirpation. In an effort to minimize the effects of domestication, the program implements a period of wild exposure.

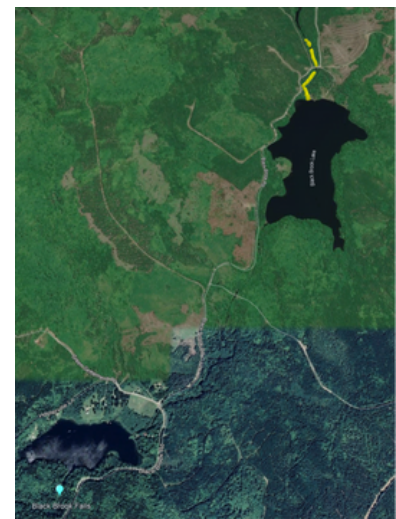
This is achieved by releasing unfed fry into an area of suitable fry habitat and returning 18 months later to collect the individuals as fall parr, via electrofishing and transporting these fish back to the Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility for program continuity.

To ensure that only program fish are recovered, these sites exist above a barrier to fish passage which prevents egg deposition from wild salmon. On the St. Mary’s River, two such sites are used. Black Brook on East Branch contains fry habitat above Black Brook falls.

This site receives 400 individuals from each family group per year, equating to the release of about 30,000 unfed fry annually since 2016. In recent years, the accessible fry habitat above Black Brook Falls has become impacted by sedimentation, reducing the amount of available fry habitat, and likely resulting in fewer family groups being recovered.

The second site utilized in the wild exposure component of the Live Gene Bank is Chisholm Brook on the West Branch. The accessible fry habitat that lies between the upper and lower set of waterfalls receives about 900 individuals from each family group per year equating to about 51,000 unfed fry annually since 2018.

Chisholm Brook contains more appropriate fry habitat, and has not been impacted by sedimentation as is the case on Black Brook, East Branch. Recapture rates of wild exposed fall parr have been consistently higher at Chisholm Brook, and collections below the site recover individuals displaced by high water events (yellow electrofishing track).



Black Brook on East Branch contains fry habitat (shown in white) above Black Brook Falls.

Continued on Page 18

St. Mary's sea trout raised in local hatchery essential to successful re-stocking program

By Sandy MacDonald
SMRA

For countless centuries, healthy sea-run trout have been finning their way up the pristine waters of the St. Mary's River, searching for food and a gravelly redd to spawn in the fall. In recent years, thousands of those trout have had a helping hand, thanks to an ambitious artificial spawning program.

The sea trout spawning program, managed by the Fraser's Mills Fish Hatchery and Nova Scotia Inland Fisheries, and supported by the SMRA, ensures that each year thousands of tiny trout are hatched and raised in the facility in St. Andrews.

Spawned from wild male Brook Trout captured in the St. Mary's River with female broodstock kept at the hatchery, the tiny fish carry the distinct genetic imprint of wild St. Mary's sea-run trout.

In late October of 2023, SMRA was granted a special licence to capture 25 male Brook (Speckled) trout in the waters of the St. Mary's for the spawning program.

Several volunteer anglers under the licence fished the cooling pools, gullies and lakes searching for large healthy male trout. When the angling period closed, nine male trout were delivered to the Fraser Mills hatchery, the heartiest with a pronounced hooked jaw (kype) and an orangy-red underbelly indicating a sexually-mature fish ready to spawn.



Alex Parker, manager of the Fraser's Mills fish hatchery.

Over the following weeks, the captured males were cross-bred with the mixed-genetic females. Those fertilized eggs were carefully deposited by hatchery staff on steel racks in long water-filled tanks in the hatchery building.

By mid-February, the tiny trout still had their yolk-sack attached, providing onboard nutrients for the growing alevins. After a month, the sacks fall off and the trout begin their lifelong hunt to feed from the waters they swim in.

The tiny fry, no bigger than your baby finger, are fed in the fresh-water troughs for several weeks. By June, the small trout are ready to be released back into the St. Mary's River.

Each year the Fraser's Mills hatchery raises thousands of Speckled, Rainbow and Brown trout and Atlantic salmon to stock the province's rivers and ponds.

Most of the trout are raised to support fishing derbys and various stock enhancement programs around Nova Scotia.

These sea-run trout are anadromous Speckled (brook) trout — they spawn in freshwater in the autumn and after two or three years of growth in quiet streams and lakes, they migrate to saltwater as adults. Several thousand hatchery-raised seatrout fry are re-introduced annually into the waters of the St. Mary's River, all with the genetic imprint of the native fish.

Last May, several elementary students from St. Mary's Education Centre, under the guidance of SMRA director Elizabeth Jones, helped release hundreds of tiny trout into the St. Mary's River.

The provincial hatchery program began in 1982, and continues to stock approximately 200 lakes around the province with "catchable size" Brook and Rainbow trout. After the recreational fishing season ends, a second late-season restocking effort by the Department puts thousands more Speckled trout into provincial lakes as part of the fall enhancement program.

Between April and November of 2023, Inland fisheries stocked Brook and Rainbow trout in more than 25 lakes in Guysborough, Antigonish and Pictou Counties. The successful spawning program has ensured a healthy population of sea run trout continues to flourish in the St. Mary's River.

Coldbrook biodiversity facility searching for new site for salmon rearing program



DFO work on Chisholm Brook, 2021



Chisholm Brook recapture area, noted by white electrofishing track.

Continued from Page 16

In 2022, Hurricane Fiona destroyed the old growth hemlock forest in the area between the two sets of waterfalls. Although the fish habitat is likely unchanged, access to the habitat is lost.

A fall parr collection was carried out in 2022 but electrofishing was only feasible below the falls due to hurricane debris. There was no collection in 2023 due to water conditions.


The degradation of habitat at Black Brook, and the loss of accessibility at Chisholm Brook have serious implications for the conservation program on the St. Mary's River.

The Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility staff are asking SMRA and community members for assistance identifying an alternate site that meets the following criteria:

1. Contains appropriate cobble habitat for fry
2. Is above a barrier to fish passage

3. Is accessible for fry releases and electrofishing

Please contact Anna MacDonnell (anna.macdonnell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) with information regarding alternative sites. Until a replacement site is found, releases and subsequent collections will occur below the waterfalls on Chisholm Brook.



CBDC Guysborough County
(902) 533-2770

Self-Employment Benefit Program

Program Provides:

- Entrepreneurial support
- Financial assistance to eligible participants
- Workshops, coaching, mentoring, business plan assistance.

Sponsored by:
Employment Nova Scotia

Fond Memories of the St. Mary's

By Joe Fillion

Originally written in October '05

If ever there was a heaven on this earth, I certainly have had the pleasure of discovering it — salmon fishing on the St. Mary's River in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia.

I decided to write this article for the many fond memories I experienced on this beautiful river, and to bring to mind the many fine fellow fishermen I had the honor of knowing.

I am now 68 years old and many of the friends I met on the river have since passed away. However they will always remain in my memory.

I first had the pleasure of fishing the river in the latter part of the 1950's. A great friend of mine, Edgar Ayers, (he had fished the river for many years previously), introduced me to the river.

Edgar was one of the finest fishermen I had ever had the pleasure of meeting. I recall one day at the Mackeen's Brook pool, Edgar landed three fish. In total they weighed close to 60 pounds, and they were mid-May early run East Branch salmon. For many years thereafter I fished those early run salmon at McKeen's Pool, Miller's Bank, Cut-Bank Pool and the Head of The Lake Pool.

Some of the great fishermen I met during those days were Bill Partridge, Wes MacDougall, Sam MacDougall, Bill Strople and Bert Publicover to name a few. Bert Publicover was a great old man. He had a Coleman stove in the back of his car and always invited you to share a cup of tea with him.



The legendary "bungalow" at Silver's Pool, with salmon anglers in river punts.

One day fishing the Cut-Bank pool I hooked a nice fish at approximately 1 pm. After steadily fighting the fish for a long period of time I turned to the "old experts" on the bank and asked, "Does anyone have any ideas?"

There was no reply from those that always readily gave their expertise. At 4:15 pm, with the help of Bill Partridge, we landed the fish out in the lake. It only weighed 17 pounds but without a doubt it was the hardest fighting fish I recall hooking.

One of the characters I remember from the area was the man that owned the canteen and boarding camp, Raz Price, a very tall man who always had a story to tell about the river and the fishermen that fished it.

I recall that Edgar and I once stayed in his bunkhouse above the barn by his canteen.

If I remember correctly, there where about seven bunks, the price was right, and you could cook your meals there.

Moving down river is the famous Silver's Pool where I first witnessed the fishing expertise of the late Dr. Silver. There he was out in the fast-rising waters of the pool, one-hand casting the fly while the other held the pole tucked under his arm that steadied the river boat swaying in the swift current.

In those days I recall looking down-stream towards the Meadow Pool and seeing the steady jumping of grilse in the air. Fishing in the pools around Silver's Pool such as Harrison's, The Oak-tree and The Wire Pool was great fishing and offered both East River and West River fish.

Continued on page 25

SMRA Operations Report for 2024:

Another busy year at the Centre

By Megan Myers
Interpretive Centre Manager



Summer students Patrick McGinn and Sadie Beaver taking a deserved break

It was another busy season for us at the SMRA Education and Interpretive Centre. For several weeks this past spring, the grade 4-5 class at St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy (SMECA) in Sherbrooke shared their classroom with a tank of sea-run trout, as part of the Fish Friends program. SMRA director Elizabeth Jones set up an oxygenated aquarium in Ms. Clifton's classroom, filled with about 200 tiny fish eggs, all spawned from St. Mary's River Brook trout.

Six weeks later, Jones and the class bussed to a small brook behind Sherbrooke Village to release the little trout back into the St. Mary's River. The students dipped plastic cups into the bucket of tiny fish and carefully released them into the fresh-water brook to continue their life cycle. The Fish Friends program, developed 25 years ago by ASF, helps raise awareness of the life cycle of trout and salmon.

Our AGM was held on Sunday, May 28. We had a great turnout and our proposed resolutions passed. This means that we will now be able to have virtual and hybrid meetings of SMRA members.

Also, in an effort to increase our membership we have changed our membership structure. We have eliminated our \$5.00 Junior member category and replaced it with a \$10 Supporting Member. In addition to this change, our memberships will now be a one-year membership, expiring twelve months from date of purchase.

Patrick McGinn returned as one of our summer students, and we welcomed Sadie Beaver to our team! In addition to helping around the Interpretive Centre, they assisted director Edwin DeMont with our Audiomoth acoustic biodiversity surveys in the St Mary's River watershed. The Audiomoth devices were set up in various locations in the watershed.

At each location, three Audiomoths were set up, one recording audible sound for birds, one recording ultrasonic sound for bats, and one underwater listening for hydroacoustic sounds. Some of the species identified included a rare Greater Yellowlegs, a very rare Hoary Bat, listed as critically imperiled in the province, and Mouse-eared bats.

On July 18th, Storybrooke Dayhome visited the Interpretive Centre for the day. The kids got to see the growth of a Salmon, did a craft, played in a homemade river, and enjoyed a barbeque.

On July 29th, Randy Lauff, a Biologist from St. FX came out to lead a bug walk for us. It was very interesting, and we all learned something new and discovered some new bugs!

On August 3rd, the SMRA hosted provincial Minister Tim Halman, Minister Greg Morrow and Minister Pat Dunn on a full day of touring around the St. Mary's River.

On August 9th, we hosted 19 kids from the municipality day camp for an afternoon. We made a turtle craft, created a model watershed, and played a salmon life cycle game.



Sadie and Patrick reviewing the Audiomoth data using Kaleidoscope software.

St. Mary's River Days was held on Saturday August 12th. The weather was great and there was a good turnout. We had a booth set up with photos and information, Kenny did some fly tying, and Sadie and Patrick led a fly-casting game. The afternoon ended with the cardboard boat regatta where Sadie and Patrick were the winners of the race!

Continued on P. 21

SMRA Operations Report for 2024

Continued from page 20

On August 28th, Minister Greg Morrow visited the association on behalf of Environment and Climate Change Minister Timothy Halman to announce the new 684 hectare Archibald Lake Wilderness Area.

For our Rafflebox 50/50 draw, we raised a total of \$1025.72 after prizes and fees, for the 2023 season. Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets, and keep your eyes peeled for the 50/50 to start up again this spring.

We worked with the Tourism Digital Assistance Program to give our website a fresh new look. Visit www.stmarysriverassociation.com to check it out! Sadie and Patrick created a quiz for the museum. When visitors arrive, they can scan a QR code with their phone and can complete a quiz online, relating to the museum displays. Those who get all the answers correct win a treat.

As always, I would ask everyone to please remember to renew your annual memberships. This can be done in person at the association or through our giftshop at <https://www.stmarysriverassociation.com/giftshop.html>. Tax receipts can be issued online.

We look forward to seeing you this upcoming season!



GREENUP TREE SERVICE

TREE CARE & REMOVAL
FULLY INSURED ~ FREE QUOTES

902-968-1677
justinb_smith@hotmail.com



Justin Smith
AT0715A



Be a Friend of the St. Mary's River!

Joining the SMRA helps us restore, conserve and protect the St. Mary's River ecosystem

Your Membership helps with:

- Sea Trout Enhancement Program
- Habitat Restoration
- Research Projects
- Maintenance of our Interpretive Centre and development of new displays
- Free programming throughout the summer
- Fry Stocking

"Health for the St. Mary's River, the Atlantic salmon and our community."

Membership Benefits

- Vote at our Annual General Meeting
- Receive our annual newsletter
- Attend our Board of Directors meeting as guests
- Be elected to the Board of Directors and participate in SMRA governance.
- Get involved in our working committees
- Participate in our events
- Discounts in our gift shop
- Email updates
- SMRA Membership dues and donations over \$20 are CRA income tax deductible



Clean, Quiet, Close

WHIDDEN PARK

Campground Cottages

Swimming pools, campfires, good times with friends and family.

154 Campsites	4 Cottages	2 Rental RVs
• Family Campground • Nightly, Weekly & Monthly	• 2-Bedroom Minihomes • Exceptional value!	• Weekly Rental • The easiest way to camp!

WiFi  4 Park Lane, Antigonish NS **1-877-263-3736**  whiddens.com

Treasurer's Report for 2023 Fiscal Year

(April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023)

Following is a summary of the finances of the St. Mary's River Association for the fiscal year of 2023. Our Financial Statements (unaudited) are prepared by Antigonish Tax Services in Antigonish NS. A detailed copy of the Financial Statements can be found online on our website at stmarysriverassociation.com.

Opening Balance as of April 1, 2022 was \$301,300.

Revenue

Revenue for the year was \$122,015. Most of our revenue is received from government and partner organization grants. Other revenue is received from memberships, donations, wage subsidy and operation of the Interpretive Centre in Sherbrooke NS.

Expenses

Expenses for the year was \$185,067.

Most of the expenses incurred by the organization are for the operation of the Interpretive Centre (including salaries, insurance and office supplies) and the habitat restoration of the river.

The closing balance on March 31, 2023 was \$238,248.

We would like to acknowledge our supporters for their purchase of memberships and for donations received in 2022/2023.

Thank You!

Prepared by Gwen Boutillier, SMRA Treasurer

Liscombe Lodge Resort

The Nature Lover's Resort

Hotel Rooms & Chalets
Indoor Pool, Hot Tub & Sauna
Hiking Trails, Canoes &
Kayaks, Indoor Games
Room, River Cruise & so
much more

2884 Highway 7
Liscomb Mills, NS B0J 2A0

1-800-665-6343

www.liscombelodge.ca



Getting hooked on fly fishing

By William Lowles

Special contributor

My name is William Lowles, and I am seven years old. This year, I wanted to learn how to fly fish like my dad. He does a lot of fly fishing and I have gone with him before, but I used a spinning rod. Last Christmas I asked for chest waders so that I could stay dry when I was walking in the river. My dad's friend Brent knows how much I like to go hunting for grouse and ducks with my dad. He was very excited to hear that I wanted to learn to fly fish. He gave me a TFO Bug Launcher fly fishing rod, reel, and line combo for me to keep. It was so nice of him, and I was so excited! Thank you, Brent!

One day, Dad said that the water looked perfect for trout fishing, so we went to a river near our house. My mom and sisters came with us. My mom has been learning how to fly fish, too. I let my two older sisters try my new fly-fishing rod, but they still wanted to fish with their spinning rods.

Dad tied on a green Woolly Bugger and started teaching me how to cast my new fly-fishing rod. It didn't take me very long and I could cast part way across the river. Dad said I could cast well enough to move to some of the better fishing spots. We stood at the edge of a deeper pool that Dad said would be a good spot for trout. He told me to cast my line across the pool and to hold on in case a fish bit my Woolly Bugger. After a few casts I felt a pull on my line but missed the fish. I cast to the same spot again and another fish came after my fly. This time he was hooked! I yelled to my dad that I had a fish on the line. I reeled the extra line onto reel and started fishing the fish. It jumped a couple of times and splashed a lot. It fought hard and pulled a lot. Dad ran fast with the net because he didn't want me to lose my first trout on my new rod. He got the net under the fish to scoop it up.



We kept the fish in the water while my dad unhooked the fish in the water. He told me that keeping fish wet is important since we are going to let the trout go.

We used a barbless hook, and it came out of the fish easy. This was my first ever wild brook trout, and I was super excited. I have caught a few rainbow trout when I was ice fishing, and once, I was out a trout derby at Trenton Park and caught a brook trout. Did you know brook trout are Nova Scotia's provincial fish?

That day I caught two or three more brook trout. My sisters caught a few fish, too. Mom didn't catch any and I don't know if my dad even fished or just helped us fish. We took a quick break to eat goldfish crackers because fishing can make you hungry. I had a lot of fun my first-time fly fishing and got to go a few more times in the summer. I can't wait to go fishing again next summer. I am going to learn to tie flies with my dad this winter. That way I can try to catch a fish on a fly that I made – I think that would be cool. Maybe some day I will be big enough to go fishing for Atlantic Salmon with my dad. I would love to catch a salmon some day, especially if my dad was there. He would be so excited for me he would likely scream.



Well Drilling | Water Treatment | Geothermal | Pumps

"Serving all of Northern Nova Scotia"

902-752-4172 | 902-386-2507

www.martinwelldrilling.ca



Trail group renewing unused rail line



McKeen Brook Bridge in Aspen

**By Charlene Porter
St. Mary's Trail Association**

The St. Mary's Trail Association is a non-profit group of local volunteers incorporated in 2008 with a vision to develop and maintain a shared-use trail along the abandoned rail line (former Guysborough Railway) in the Municipal District of St. Mary's, Guysborough County, Nova Scotia.

They believe that a sustainable, safe, welcoming and inclusive trail will:

- Provide an Active Transportation route for residents and others
- Promote Conservation and Education on Species at Risk
- Provide Education on Railway History & Community Heritage
- Become a Year Round Destination for Outdoor Recreation
- Promote Tourism & Business Development Opportunities along trail and in neighboring communities

This project will expand and develop a first class multi-use trail through New Town, Denver and Aspen to connect with the existing 6.5 km St. Mary's Nature Trail, eventually connecting Guysborough to Sunny Brae, Pictou County.

The proposed trail will provide a wonderful outdoor experience for all users, with gentle grades and firm surfaces for hikers and cyclists, providing sturdy bridges with good railings for the safety of all users. The scenery will be second to none with ever changing vistas to all points of the compass.

There will be many signed historical stops featuring railroad abutments and culverts constructed in 1930 and 1931 and at the historic "Sons of Martha" cairn, dedicated to railway workers. The trail will offer a wilderness experience, although it is not far from civilization and the road for safety. The trail, for much of its length, is in close proximity to paved highways.

There will be many access points for short or long hikes, with good signage and facilities. This trail crosses many pristine brooks and passes by, and even through, unspoiled nature with eagles, crows, ravens, ducks, and fish of many types. There are turtles and deer, moose and bear, rabbits and partridge, woodcock and thrush, as well as many other woodland creatures.

One main feature is certain to be the close proximity to, and the crossings over, the beautiful St. Mary's River where conservation and preservation of endangered species habitat will be a priority in developing this trail.

The Association recently received a Letter of Authority from the Dept. of Natural Resources authorizing them to build and maintain a trail, once conditions are met. The group is waiting for various required permits and funding from grants to hopefully begin construction later this year.

The group has been busy maintaining the 6.5 km trail from the Cameron Lakes to Aspen while working on proposals, grant applications and hosting public meetings. Trail work is a rewarding and labour intensive task.

There is always brush to clear, puddles to fill, gravel to spread and other maintenance activities. Members have been able to promote the trail on social media, co-host hikes, and participate in other volunteer activities.

Trail building requires funding from all levels of government and private donors, along with sweat equity from many volunteers. The group would like to thank the community, organizations, businesses, other non-profit groups and individuals for their support of our projects.

New members are always welcome to join the SMTA.

Charlene Porter is the secretary and project lead of the St. Mary's Trail Association.

Recalling the glory days of angling: Every pool held lifelong memories

Continued from Page 19

I recall one day I had waded across by the Oak-Tree and fished down to The Wire Pool. There was a lot of fish going and I had landed three fish; two grilse and one salmon that was 20 pounds. The larger of the fish was gaffed by John Silver. Unbeknownst to me the water had been rising, and as I made my way back across the river, I did so on my tip toes and very frightfully made it across in the fast-moving waters at the junction of the East and West rivers.

Further down the river is the Crows Nest Pool and was one of Ron and my favorite pools. I recall one early morning in July we decided that we would go upriver from our camp site and fish the Crows Nest. I went through the pool first and prior to hooking a nice salmon I had raised at least six other fish. Ron coming through behind me had a similar experience. I don't know how many fish were in the pool that morning, but I know those memories will remain embedded in my memory forever. I would consider the Crows Nest Pool to be one of the most beautiful settings on the river.

As the sun came up over the high bank along the river's edge and facing down river as the morning mist disappeared, the scenery was spectacular.

The next pool down river was the Island Pool. This was a pool that required the water to be just at a perfect level to hold fish.



Landing a big salmon on the St. Mary's

If you were lucky enough to be there when the fish were holding, it was a rewarding experience. The Island Pool was also an excellent dry fly stretch of water, my favorite dry fly being the "Macintosh."

Moving down river once again you come to the Mitchell Pool. This was a beautiful setting and was one of Edgar's favorite pools. Edgar could nearly always find a fish in that pool — however I seemed to never have good luck there.

A well-kept secret

I guess that was one of the pools that separated the men from the boys. I recall one of Edgar's favorite flies on that pool was the "Lady Amherst". A lot of the old fellows fished that fly, especially during the early spring fishing on the East branch of the river.

The next pool down stream is the Red Bank Pool. I believe, for many years it was a well-kept secret by a very few who knew of its existence.

I remember Ron and I would find our way through the bushes along the back road down to this pool, one of the prettiest little pools on the river. If you were on this pool when conditions were right, you were in for some exciting fishing.

As your fly swung through the tail of the pool in the fast water and the fish took, it would almost take the rod out of your hands. If you left this pool and continued downstream on the other side of the river there was another little pool. I don't believe it had a name, but I have caught grilse there in the month of July.

Traveling further down river we come to the Lyons Pool. The pool was accessible from the number 7 highway. I remember in the early '60s this was a very popular pool on the river. I also recall that due to an enormous flooding one year the pool structure was changed by the shifting of the gravel bottom and the pool was never really productive after that.

I spent three days there once with Cliff Kaiser in his cabin on the Lyons Pool. It was in July and the water was good but there were very few fish that seemed to hold in the pool. I never hooked a fish, but Cliff did manage to catch one nice grilse. The forces of nature sometimes change the structure of rivers, making new pools, but often destroying others. This, however, has not contributed to the demise of the Atlantic Salmon. I believe man has, and what a terrible shame.

Continued on page 26

St. Mary's River: Heaven on Earth

Continued from Page 25

The next pool I wish to speak about is probably the most famous pool on the river, The Ford Pool. What a wonderful stretch of water for the salmon to hold and many great fishermen to gather. I used to spend the summer camped at Nimrod's Rest just up the road from the mouth of Archibald's Brook.

My wife and I and the four children spent many happy hours in the campground. The children could swim in the lake, my wife could spend quiet hours reading and, of course, I could be found on the river. There are many stories I could tell about the Ford Pool but I will limit to one that Ron and I still laugh about when reminiscing about our past experiences on the river.

One day on the Ford, I believe it was Bill Stropel, hooked a nice fish and Bill Bryson grabbed a net to help Bill land the fish. Bill waded out in the pool and when the fish appeared ready to net he slipped the net under the fish, only to have the fish break through the netting and make another run, with the fly line running through the net.

This happened about three times before Bill finally got the fish to stay in the net to land it. As Bill came back up by the "Liar's Bench", Mike Craig held up his movie camera and said, "Bill I'll sell you this film for a thousand dollars". As you may guess the Liar's Bench came alive with laughter.

A nice grilse in the air

This pool is where I first met Gordie Macintosh. I always thought I could throw a pretty good fly line but here was a man, a southpaw who could throw the most perfect line of any fisherman I ever came across. Gordie was without any doubt the best — few people have had the privilege of witnessing better.

I recall one morning I went over to this pool early. I sat there watching the water and, sure enough, after a short time I saw a tail break water, then another. I knew then I was in for some action. I decided to tie on a small MacIntosh dry fly, about a number 10 or 12. When it was time to fish, I floated the dry fly down the fast water and when it reached the V area a nice grilse was in the air.

After about three trips through the pool I had my two fish for the day. I recall another day when my son Jason and I fished the pool. Jason would be about ten years old then — I hooked one nice grilse and he landed two.

Not long after, I met Gordie Macintosh on the river and the news had made its way upriver — my son had out fished his Father. You can bet no one was more proud than I was.

During my life I have fished many rivers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and The Moise River in Quebec. I was awed by all of them. However the many years of fishing the St Mary's River, and the wonderful people I had the honor of sharing this river with, will remain one of my fondest memories.

For the time spent in the great outdoors of this beautiful province of Nova Scotia, I am deeply thankful. If there really is a Heaven on earth, God willing someday I may return to those peaceful waters of the St Mary's and be permitted to drift a dry fly over its surface once more in pursuit of that magnificent fish — The Atlantic Salmon.

**atlantic
digital**
REPRODUCTIONS INC.

Let Us Improve Your Image!

BUSINESS CARDS	EVENT SIGNAGE
BROCHURES	TRADESHOW DISPLAYS
FLYERS	WALL COVERINGS
BOOKS	WINDOW GRAPHICS
POSTERS	VEHICLE DECALS
POST CARDS	CANVAS PRINTS
CALENDARS	FLOOR GRAPHICS
MAGNETS & STICKERS	DIE CUTTING
PROMOTIONAL ITEMS	PACKING
CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS	DIRECT MAIL
DOCUMENT SCANNINGand so much more

*Atlantic Canada's
Full Service Printer*
902 423-4466

a part of the Nova Scotia Museum

RETURN to Sherbrooke Village

USE PROMO CODE
"RETURN"
FOR DISCOUNTED FAMILY PASSES



Ghost Tours

- After Hours
- Exclusive Access
- Curated Stories
- Guided Exploration
- Concessions & More!



Festivals

- Celebrate N.S. Heritage
- Great Regional Fare
- Victorian Tea
- Live Music
- Contests, Games & Fun!



Concerts

- Local Heroes
- Up & Coming Talent
- International Prospects
- Fiddles, Brass, Folk, Classical, Rock & More!

Book Online

SHERBROOKEVILLAGE.CA

Wednesday - Sunday

42 Main Street
Sherbrooke, NS B0J3C0

SHERBROOKE
VILLAGE



902-522-2400
sherbrookevillage.ca

Funding Partners

The Elizabeth Wakeman Henderson Foundation
NSSA Adopt a Stream Program
Nova Scotia Salmon Association
NS Student Careers Skill Development Program
Canada Summer Jobs
Donors through the Paypal Giving Fund Canada
Donors through the Canada Helps Fund
Wild Space Productions
All Donors to our Nope Campaign
Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation
Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund
CPAWS
Firefly Digital Media
Anonymous Donors

We cannot do what we do without our funding partners, our advisory council and our members.


Thank
you

 @GregMorrowMla

Greg 
Morrow

MLA - Guysborough-Tracadie

Proud Community Supporter

 902-533-2777

 gregmorrow4gt@gmail.com

 9996 HWY 16, Guysborough



If undelivered return to:
St. Mary's River Association
PO Box 179
Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, Canada
BOJ 3C0



Photo of Mitchell's Pool by SMRA director George Sutherland