

Blue Mountain NEWS

April 2021 Edn. 11

Spring Colours at Fox Lake, Irwin Barrett

FROM THE BOARD

As spring arrives, our board of directors has been busy. We presented to the [HRM Community Planning and Economic Development Committee](#) on the importance and urgency associated with acting on council commitments to the BMBCL. We have also been meeting on Zoom with some of the new Councillors and, most recently, with our local members of Parliament as noted below.

While there is still much left to do, we are very fortunate to have broad support for the promised Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Regional Wilderness Park. We want to thank Councillors [Pamela Lovelace](#) and [Kathryn Morse](#) for their recent financial donations. These funds help us to expand our activities and cover our ongoing costs. For this, we are very grateful.

COVID 19 has interrupted so much in all of our lives, and our organization is no exception. We have suspended public events, hikes and our AGM, and we plan to return to these activities in the coming months. We are also hoping to expand the number of members on our working committees and our Board, so please consider volunteering. Watch for more news on this soon.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter!

MEETING WITH MPS

On March 23, 2021, Friends met with the four Halifax - Dartmouth area MPs: *Geoff Regan, Andy Fillmore, Darren Fisher and Darrell Sampson* - all of whom are very supportive of the BMBCL Regional Wilderness Park. It was great to have the opportunity to keep them informed about our activities and to ask for their continued support in Ottawa. In 2019, the federal government provided



\$860,000 to the city which enabled the acquisition of the [Armco & Barrett lands](#) in the BMBCL.

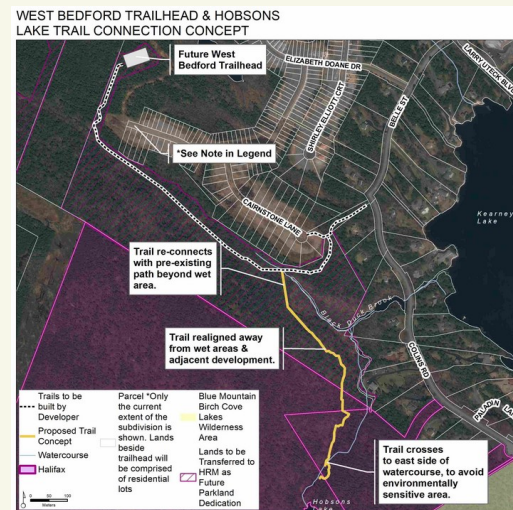
The centre point of the discussion was the federal Fall Throne speech commitment:

*"The Government will work with municipalities as part of a **new commitment to expand urban parks**, so that everyone has access to green space. This will be done while protecting a quarter of Canada's land and a quarter of Canada's oceans in five years."*

This is a very promising statement as it specifically includes urban parks! Our discussion focused on the federal dollars that might be made available to support this commitment. We are looking forward to the April 19th budget to see what opportunities it will offer for the advancement of the BMBCL Regional Wilderness Park.

BROOKLINE TRAIL UPDATE

Work on the Brookline Trail ([Bedford West](#)) access to the BMBCL has begun. Late this Fall Clayton constructed some limited trail commencing at the end of Cairnstone and ending at Black Duck Brook. HRM has retained Cobequid Consulting to lay out proposed trail access to the Hobson Lake portion of BMBCL. However, no trail work on the necessary brook crossing construction has yet begun. One complication is that in the area of the proposed crossing, the various heavy rain events this winter resulted in regular flooding of the [Old Annapolis Road](#) trail which is part of this plan and will connect to the HRM Hobson Lake proposed trails. Friends has alerted HRM to this issue.



Friends promoted the West Bedford trail survey earlier this year - details and pictures of the area can be seen on [our web site](#). Councillor for the district, *Pamela Lovelace*, reports that HRM is pleased with the number of responses and that the results will be shared once they are compiled and synthesized. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE RETURNS

Help put Halifax Regional Municipality on the global nature map! Once again, on April 30th to May 5th, cities/places from across the planet will compete for the title of *the most Biodiverse City*. For the BMBCL, this all helps to document and locate our wild inventory. Whether you're an avid naturalist or a casual hiker, everyone can participate: it's easy, fun, and will encourage you to get outdoors. Find out more [here](#).



Hike Nova Scotia also has a detailed write-up and is a [recommended read](#)!

HEAVY TRAIL USE

All BMBCL trail users are reminded to please take care when visiting the area, especially with the noted increase in visitors due in part to the pandemic. With no active trail management plan in place, hikers are asked to "[Leave No Trace](#)", as we all enjoy what the BMBCL has to

offer. Specifically, we are seeing new trails forming, braiding, trail widening, and consequent erosion along some of the more popular paths. Fragile plants next to the trail can be saved by going directly through the water and muck. Let's all be active stewards of the BMBCL and help to ensure that a high quality visitor experience will remain in place for all who follow.



DO WE REALLY NEED THAT CAMPFIRE?

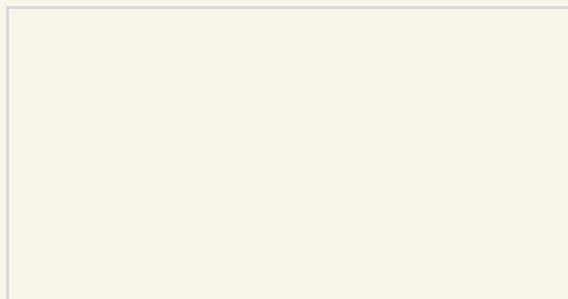
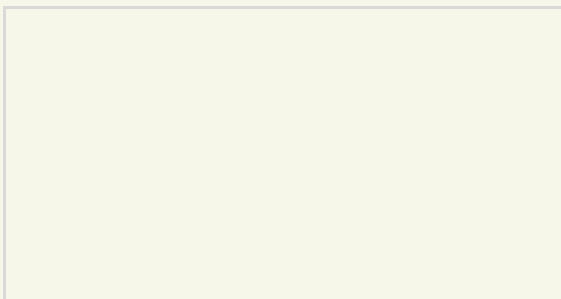
As the number of users visiting the BMBCL continues to climb, so does the risk of a serious incident resulting from the spread of poorly managed campfires. But, do we really need to use that fire site? *Mark Young* presents the case that although we have built traditional campfires for many years, now is the time to consider the alternatives. These options, managed carefully, are generally much safer for the BMBCL and will get the job done with far less impact on our woodlands.

Check out Mark's complete article [here](#).



FIRE SITES

With [another fire season](#) upon us, we are disappointed to find an increasing number of campfire sites in most of the more frequented BMBCL areas, notably at Susies Lake (behind Kent), Charlies Lake and Hobsons Lake. Aside from the risk posed, these sites take away from the natural beauty of the BMBCL and also send a message to others that it is OK to continue this practice. As [referenced c/o NS Environment](#), the use of fire bowls and hiking stoves (see below!) represent alternatives to live fires. We would like to extend our thanks to *Laurie Blades* and other Friends members who continue to clean up these sites as they are found.





Hobsons Lake fire site, BEFORE - AFTER

CHECK [HERE](#) FOR UP-TO-DATE, PROVINCIAL BURN RESTRICTIONS
c/o NS Lands & Forestry.

21 LAKES SAMPLED!

The first ever, complete water quality survey of the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes has just been completed this month by a team of enthusiastic volunteers. The purpose of this survey was to collect baseline water quality data from lakes within the boundaries of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Regional Wilderness Park, many of which are threatened by development. With two watersheds surrounded by development, this survey will provide important information, critical to understanding and maintaining this precious commodity over the long term.

For more details, see [this article](#) by *Don Gordon*, Project Coordinator.
A big Blue Mountain thank you goes out to Don and his team!



L-R: Pierre Clement, Dave Young,
Dusan Soudek and Heather Leslie
getting ready with a practice session
at Cox Lake. Pic: Don Gordon

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Dusan & Dave took on some heavy
lifting for this project!



Waypoints represent samples taken

CONTACT US: If you have requests, ideas, comments, concerns... please let us know c/o our website or email: bluemountainbirchcovelakes@gmail.com

PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS: All editions, starting in 2018, can be viewed [on our website](#).





Hobsons Lake Morning, Richard Vinson