

One step further for Biodiversity
Report of a Meeting with Three Departments
September 10th, 2013
Report by Annie Guérard

At a recent meeting to discuss the idea of a high level multistakeholder biodiversity council, the two Ministers and three Deputy Ministers present responded positively and are keen to further explore the idea. Bruce Northrup, Minister of Natural Resources (DNR), Bruce Fitch, Minister of Environment and Local Government (DELG), their Deputy Ministers and the Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries (DAAF) and other staff attended the meeting with members of environmental groups who participate in the Biodiversity Collaborative. The idea of a multistakeholder biodiversity council to lead the implementation of the NB Biodiversity Strategy was highlighted as a priority at the February 2013 meeting of the Biodiversity Collaborative.

Highlights of the ministers' response

A high level meeting will be organized by DNR this fall to gauge the mood in respect to this initiative, engage stakeholders, discuss the idea and identify potential next steps to establish a biodiversity council. Funding may be available through the Environmental Trust Fund to support the process of establishing the council. The provincial Biodiversity Strategy offers ground on which to build a multistakeholder council and the government wants to be able to track progress in respect to provincial targets and to identify what has been accomplished so far and what requires more focus.

About the meeting

The idea of a multi stakeholder council is one of the priorities developed during the Biodiversity Collaborative workshop on February 14th. This meeting was a follow-up to a meeting in February 2013 with three ministers on the same topic.

The ministers were also informed about the progress made so far in regards to the priorities that were developed collectively by participants of the collaborative. The members of environmental groups that were present provided eloquent testimonies and information to support the idea that the work of the collaborative offers solid ground to built on and that this work would be furthered by the creation of a multistakeholder council.

Attending the meeting from environmental groups were:

- Roberta Clowater, CPAWS-NB,
- Megan de Graaf, Fundy Biosphere Reserve,
- Sabine Dietz, Nature NB,
- Matt Abbott, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, and
- Mary Ann Coleman and Annie Guérard, New Brunswick Environmental Network.

As well, attending the meeting were Bill Levesque, Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Ressources, Phil Lepage, Deputy Minister, Environment and Local Government, Robert Rioux, Deputy Minister, Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and active participants in the Biodiversity Collaborative, Peter McLaughlin, DELG, Steve Gordon and Dan Beaudette, DNR.