

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION - In September, 2011 the LCDA Executive approved the creation of a new committee called the Sustainable Development Committee (SDC). This committee reports to the LCDA Executive and has identified a number of goals. It will work, through the LCDA, to promote an understanding of the concept of sustainable development as it relates to Lochaber. It will help the LCDA keep both year-round and seasonal residents informed about trends, issues and best practices concerning land use and development in Lochaber. The SDC will follow land use and development activities and trends around Lochaber Lake, in particular as they may impact on the water quality of the Lake. The SDC will advise the LCDA on options for dealing with land use and development issues of importance to the community as they arise, and help the LCDA ensure that Lochaber interests are effectively represented in government policy, regulations and legislation concerned with land use and development.

PRIORITY PROJECTS - The Sustainable Development Committee has decided to focus on three main projects:

Land Use Planning for the Lochaber area - The County of Antigonish currently has 3 areas designated for planning: the Central Planning Area; the Fringe Planning Area; and the Keppoch / Beaver Mountain Planning Area. The remainder of the County is what is known as the 'un-planned' area. Lochaber falls into this category. The 3 planned areas each have their own land use planning strategy and by-law. These were developed and approved during the 1990s and 2000s. These strategies and by-laws set out the principles to be followed in land use planning, as well as issues of concern and policies to be followed.

In the fall of 2011, the LCDA formally asked the Antigonish County Council to consider establishing a new planning area that would include Lochaber. It was suggested that the area would take in the southwestern portion of Antigonish County. Such an area could be bounded by the 3 existing planning areas and the county boundaries for Guysborough and Pictou Counties. It would be a bit larger than the Keppoch area, smaller than the Central area and similar in size to the Fringe area. Much of the habitation in this suggested area is in the band along Highway 7. The planning area would also take in Ohio, St. Joseph, Pinevale and probably James River.

The creation of a land use strategy and land use bylaw involves extensive community consultation. If the Council approves such a process, the residents of the proposed area will have considerable opportunities to have their ideas heard and considered.

A Water Quality Study of Lochaber Lake - Water quality studies of Lochaber Lake were carried out in the 1970s and in 1994-5. The results of the latter study were reported in *A water quality assessment of Lochaber Lake, Antigonish County, Nova Scotia* / prepared by Darrell Taylor, Herb Callahan and David Shea; written by Darrell Taylor, 1995. This report is available at www.gov.ns.ca/nse/surface.water/docs/LochaberLakeWaterQuality.pdf.

Several residents have expressed concern over the past few years about the effect of a growing population on the water quality in Lochaber Lake, and argued for a new study to determine whether or not the quality of the water has changed over the past 15 years. A chief concern is whether or not there has been an increase in coliform bacteria. The LCDA Executive has directed the SDC to carry out a new study. This study will be conducted in the summer of 2012, probably over the May-October period.

Public Education of Residents on Issues of Common Interest - While it will be valuable to have a land use strategy and bylaw for the Lochaber area, achieving the broad goal of a healthy environment and healthy community will depend heavily on residents' understanding and active support for what we are calling "best practices". Accordingly, public education will be an important stream of activity for the Committee. In particular, the SDC will prepare information about issues of common interest and find effective ways to disseminate that information. The first issues the Committee has identified are: shoreline protection & lake water quality.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – Current members of the committee are **Martha Brown, Leslie Buckland-Nicks, John Lamb (Chair), Alison Lee, Paul McClung, Cindy Murphy, Lynn Patterson, Lisa Schuyler and Glenn Terris.**

CONTACT INFORMATION - The SDC welcomes your interest in the committee. If you have questions or comments about the Sustainable Development Committee, or would like to get involved, please contact the committee at sustainable.development@lochaber.ca.