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## Coastal erosion is becoming a growing concern



Published on May 2nd, 2010  
 LeRoy Peach

**I was born in a home on the banks of Morien Bay on a lot of land free and clear of the cliff, and I went to sleep nightly to the ebb and flow of the eternal tide, aware of the supremacy of nature but not of the destructiveness of mankind. We had outbuildings — a garage, a barn, a chicken coop — as well as a garden extending to the cliff's edge. You could go down to the beach below or to the wharf on a steep wide path.**

Topics : [ACAP](#) , [Glace Bay Heritage Museum](#) , [Nova Scotia](#)

Department of , Homeville , Glace Bay , Port Morien

In truth, we had lots of land. So did our cousins next door and our cousins north of us who also lived on the coast. Fast forward to 2010. Erosion has taken 40 feet of the land on the lot and the fence fronting the sea has been brought in three times. The path is gone, the beach altered. Next door only 10 feet separates the house from the cliff. That's the extent to which the sea has migrated to and possessed the land.

The picture is the same on highway 255, toward Homeville. Some houses are in the Atlantic, their outbuildings not far from tumbling unceremoniously into the ocean. The sea has almost completely consumed one part.

At the sandbar, our wonderful barrier beach took a big hit in the storm surge of January. The entrance was almost breached. One more storm and the main highway could be flooded.

Hence it is time for citizens to take coastal erosion seriously, which of course has been going on for hundreds of years but has been aided in recent years by climate change — the melting ice cap, greenhouse gases causing warming including the expansion of oceans, the absence of sea ice in winter to protect cliffs. A deadly dilemma — unpredictable weather patterns such as the January storm surge with its high tides. We are in fact sleep walking through these changes.



Last week I attended a focus group at the Glace Bay Heritage Museum on coastal erosion, promoted by ACAP Cape Breton. It was a followup of a previous session on coastal erosion in Glace Bay. Eleanor Anderson, chief executive officer of ACAP, was there, as were officials from the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick governments. There were about 18 of us in all, including six students. The previous session had decided priorities for this area: coastal erosion, natural areas disappearing, storm surges, high sea levels, fewer cold days, and coastal development.

Lyle MacKenzie of the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment, discussed a template for dealing with the issue of climate change as it affects coasts — citizens developing a shared vision, analyzing the situation, producing definite strategies and taking action.

Everyone agreed that fundamental to success was awareness. The students at Glace Bay High then came up with dandy ideas — field trips, making a video, putting the issue on Facebook and YouTube, integrating erosion into the curriculum, new bylaws on development. The adults talked about greater regulations, educating the public, remediating areas and engaging the politicians.

In the first week of June, ACAP will make a presentation on coastal erosion at the Royal Canadian Legion in Port Morien. They are hoping for a good turnout. After all, climate change, and specifically erosion, should be everyone's concern. Check out [www.acapcb.ns.ca](http://www.acapcb.ns.ca) and fill out the survey on climate change.

LeRoy Peach lives in Port Morien and may be reached at [leroy\\_peach@yahoo.ca](mailto:leroy_peach@yahoo.ca). His column appears every week in the

Cape Breton Post.

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