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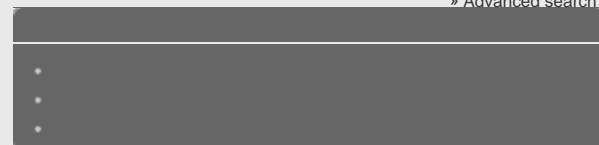


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## Tories try to protect trails

Published on May 11th, 2010  
Darrell Cole

### Private member bill to maintain roads, trails within new wilderness areas

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When the plan by government to cross trails within a new wilderness area around the Chignecto Game Sanctuary is not going to happen without a fight.

Progressive Conservative Leader Karen Casey introduced a private member bill in the legislature Monday that would amend the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, ensuring that all routes, trails and roads established within newly designated wilderness areas be preserved.

A second clause introduced by Casey, on behalf of Cumberland South MLA Murray Scott, will allow people to continue using camps or cottages in these designated areas. They would also be able continue accessing these camps through a wilderness area after its designation.

"Our position is to ensure that pre-established routes, trails and roads continue to be accessible to those who require their use," said Casey. "We believe the changes to the act will provide protection to previous lease agreements, as well as maintain the integrity of the environment under the existing act."

Casey said the Conservatives support the plan to protect 12 per cent of Nova Scotia by 2015 and pointed out stakeholders within the various communities in the province advocated for the protection of access trails for the purpose of maintaining recreational and residential usage.

The Conservative position goes against that of Cumberland Wilderness that is lobbying for wilderness designation for lands in and around the game sanctuary. Cumberland Wilderness supports maintaining several key trails through the sanctuary while restricting others.

The province is presently gathering input on the possible wilderness area in Cumberland County. Officials from the Environment Department were in Springhill and Amherst last week or two days of meetings with stakeholders favouring and opposing added protection.

Several Cumberland municipal councillors are also opposed to added protection saying they feel as though the proposal could be rammed through without those affected the most being heard.

"If the people of Cumberland County don't speak up this will go forward and we'll eventually lose it all," said District 10 Coun. Ratchford Merriam, adding he was not impressed with the short notice he received about additional consultations in the area.

Coun. John Reid said the province should be holding its consultations in River Hebert and Joggins instead of Amherst and Springhill.

"If they really want an opinion, they should come listen to the people who'll be affected most," said Reid.

The preliminary review stage will be over at the end of June after which proposed boundaries will be identified with additional consultations through the remainder of 2010.

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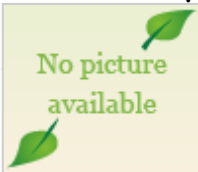
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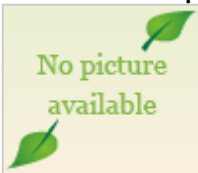
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