Good Morning, Steve,

Please find attached a submission from the Partnership for Sustainable Development of Digby Neck and Islands Society, for the consideration of the Joint Review Panel.

We are sending this electronic version in order to meet the deadline of January 21st. We will be mailing four hard-copy versions within a couple of days - one for each of the Panel members, and one for the public register in Digby.

Since the colour photos which are included in the presentation are an integral part of it, we would respectfully ask that any hard copies which you have made of this submission also be printed in colour.

Could you please confirm by return e-mail that you have received this?

Thanks very much. (Minus 8 in Freeport this morning).

All the best,

Christine Callaghan
Our Neck On The Line

By Christine Callaghan

During the period December 27th, 2004 – January 16, 2005, on behalf of the Partnership for Sustainable Development of Digby Neck and Islands Society, I contacted residents of the Neck and Islands regarding their concerns about the potential impact of the proposed quarry and marine terminal at White’s Cove on Digby Neck. I wrote an article for Passages, (The Long and Brier Islands News), and a couple of days later I sent a two-page information sheet to all 812 households in the immediately affected area, from Roxville to Westport. In the article and mail-out, I explained the project, and invited people to phone or e-mail me, either to express their ideas, or to find out how to send written submissions directly to the Joint Review Panel. In addition to telephone conversations and e-mails, I spoke with people one-on-one, and in small, informal meetings. In some cases, (with permission), the conversations were tape-recorded. (The complete transcripts of the recorded conversations, and other correspondence, are an integral part of this submission, and are included in the appendix at the end of the document).

I have observed that many issues are raised again and again. People express serious concerns about the impact the proposed quarry will have on the two principle mainstays of the economy of the Neck and Islands: the fishery and tourism. They have anxieties about water quality, air quality, quality of life. They speak about the peace and quiet that residents of the area currently enjoy, and wonder what the future holds. They are uneasy about how noise and increased shipping will affect marine animals, in particular the endangered Right Whales. They question the trustworthiness of the proponent. They fear that a mistake would prove impossible to rectify.

That these themes recur underlines the reality that the residents of this area are gravely worried about the impact of the proposed project on the environment, their livelihoods, and their way of life. I have extracted the following comments from the concerns they - my neighbours – have expressed in conversations, letters, and e-mails.

Christine Callaghan lives in Freeport, Nova Scotia. For eight years she and her husband ran a Bed and Breakfast in Freeport, and she has also worked as a guide on whale watching cruises. Prior to moving to the Islands, she worked for CBC television as a researcher and producer with the program “Land & Sea”.

Lobstering is one of the mainstays of our economy, and many on the Neck and Islands worry how this quarry will affect their livelihoods

Vaughn Tidd, Campground Operator and retired Ferryman, Whale Cove

“The noise is what I would worry about, and I could tell you why, I could give you a good explanation about the noise. You know, some days, it’s right nice and clear and you can hear everything, a lot better. There’s lots of times I can go outdoors here, especially you know walking around out here, you can hear just one of them little six-cylinder engines runnin’ idlin’, while they’re out there pickin’ their nets up to
White’s Cove. You know, from here. (And how far is that Vaughn?) Oh, couple, three mile. Two, three miles.”

Todd Sollows, Lobster Fisherman, Tiverton, Long Island
“Well you got a big marine terminal, the guys up there are losing lobster bottom, right? I don’t fish up there but it just pushes everybody closer together, that’s one thing. It drives them (the fishermen) up or down, or out, or whatever. There’s big ships coming in where you’ve got your gear, and you’re going to lose gear. Guaranteed. Because I know if we put gear out in the shipping lanes right now, we quite often lose balloons and things, you know. We like to stay just on this edge of them (shipping lanes); we don’t really go right out in the middle of them like a lot of boats do, like Westport boats and stuff. We stay on this side of them just to reduce our risk of losing gear. Those would be my two major concerns. That and the runoff. Silt’s not good. (Would silt tend to travel?) Oh up and down shore. There’s a lot of current there. It’s going to go both ways, depending on ebb tide and flood tide. I don’t know a lot about how that works, run-off and silt and everything, but I know what happened up there, I heard stories about what happened up in Port Hawkesbury, where that big quarry is. They lost their lobster bottom there. There’s just nothing but muck there now. I’ve read a few things about it. Fishermen talking about how they used to be able to fish there but they can’t anymore. It’s all muck bottom. Those would be my concerns – lobster bottom, and ships coming in there and pumping out their ballast water. I can’t see it being a good thing, that’s for sure. For the fishery.”

Gini Proulx, Bear River, (presented with the first “Nova Scotia Bay of Fundy Environmental Awareness Award” by the N.S. Dept. of Environment and Labour in Feb. 2003.”..in recognition of your dedication and commitment to monitoring, research and conservation of rare plant species, particularly in the area of Brier Island, Long Island, and Digby Neck, Nova Scotia. This award also recognizes your contribution to the knowledge of biodiversity through continued observation, research and botanical discoveries; your delivery of public education and awareness programs in plant ecology; and your encouragement of community-based habitat stewardship.”

One plant of importance that concerns me is the Rock Spikemoss, (scientific name, Selaginella rupestris). It was known to occur on Mt. Shubel, Sandy Cove and “rock outcrops east of Centreville” in Digby Co. in the 1950s. When I found it again on a basalt outcrop at the crest of the North Mountain at Centreville in October 2002, I reported the find to Mark Elderkin, DNR Biologist, Species at Risk. According to Mark, because it had not been found in 50 years, the scientific community deemed it extirpated in N.S. (no longer growing here) and removed it from the provincial rare plant list. I presume that it is back on the rare plant list now (but NOT on the Endangered Species list). June Swift, Ruth Newell and I went back two weeks later and found additional Saleginella rupestris growing on the same basalt ridge in Centreville. It is possible that this rare plant could occur on basalt outcrops in other sections of the North Mountain within the 120 acres of the proposed quarry. The guidelines should specify that a thorough botanical survey be undertaken to determine if Selaginella rupestris or any other rare plants exist on the site, and, if so, adequate protection should be provided.
Partnership for Sustainable Development of Digby Neck and Islands Society

Deborah Tobin, executive director, East Coast Ecosystems
We were in fact quite surprised to see many, many Right Whales in late October and November, and there is at least one record of a Right Whale that was killed in fishing gear in the Bay of Fundy in December. So there are records, whether fishing records, stranding or entanglement records, or dedicated survey records that show Right Whales, Fin Whales, Humpback Whales, Harbour Porpoises in the Bay of Fundy, scattered throughout, during most months of the year.
Increased ship traffic is always an issue, with any whales, anyplace, no matter what the species. We know for a fact that whales are struck by ships regularly. Right Whales don’t get out of the way of the ships. We know that to be a fact. And where you increase shipping, you increase the risk.

June Swift, Westport, librarian; naturalist; author of “Wildflowers of Brier Island”; former stewardship officer, Nature Conservancy of Canada.
I have many environmental and social impact questions that I would like to get answers to regarding this situation. Will the change from the dredging and blasting pollute the water ways, change the water movement and tidal currents, therefore disrupting migration routes for herring stocks, mackerel, lobster larvae, whales, dolphins, and other marine mammals? Will bird migration routes and nesting habitats be disrupted? Two main industries for Digby Neck and the Islands are tourism and the lobster fishery. We are internationally known for tranquil, peacefully natural settings, and the tourism industry exists by promoting eco-tourism.

Discussion among a group of Digby Neck Fishermen, Jan. 4th, 2005

Chris Tidd. I find in the Bay of Fundy, I’ve been out there over the past five, six years, that it’s increased 3 or 4 fold. There’s more gear off Whites Cove than I’ve ever seen in my life.

Kemp Stanton: There’s more boats this year. The other morning, just after daylight, I counted 28. And there’s 3 or 4 people aboard each boat.

Chris Tidd: This year I left St. Mary’s Bay, I wasn’t there two weeks. And then I was in the Bay of Fundy. I never did that before in my life.

Kemp Stanton: The lobster is the major fishery there right now. But there’s also other, smaller, fisheries, like the cucumber. And periwinkles.

Lew Theriault: If they pump water, for ballast, down off of New Jersey, I’d like to know where our lobster fishery will be in five years.

Mary Scott, Sandy Cove (suffers from asthma)
We’re not city people. We lived in Toronto and worked there for a number of years. And decided a long time ago that we were going to move here. And getting away from cities really does help (alleviate the asthma). And I think one of the concerns is what could happen with dust and other particulate matter in the air. I am concerned with what would happen here, with people who are asthmatic or have some kind of pulmonary disease, particularly for the people closer to the site. And I have always thought that there ought to be some sort of a baseline assessment done within the communities and near to the site. I have great concern for the young people especially in the community, who have the potential for severe disease. And it would seem dreadful to me that they could not continue to live in their country communities because of imported things.

Naturalist June Swift with her fieldguide to the wildflowers
Katie Shotton, Masters with Distinction, Conservation Biology, Bay of Fundy Whale Researcher

The sound, the whole sound aspect, is something that I’d like to look into more, in more detail. I’ve looked a little bit in terms of vessel noise. I was looking at this because it’s one of the things a lot of people say about the whale watch boats, is doesn’t the noise of the boat affect the whales? And you can’t say categorically whether it does or not. And big ships, obviously, you’re going to increase the amount of noise in the area. And sound is definitely one of the ways in which whales work out what’s where, when. With large ships, one of the things that’s thought to be a problem with whales is that you get the “zone of silence” ahead of the ship. So it’s possible that the whales move to what they conceive is the quiet spot, away from danger, which is actually ahead of the ship, putting them in danger. Because what happens is, you’ve got the widest part of the boat is in the middle, the sound is usually generated at the back, and that sound follows the edge of the boat and travels in waves just like light. Then when it gets to the widest point, it just keeps going out. So you get this triangular area ahead of the boat where there’s not any sound, and it’s quiet, so it’s possible that the whales move into that area. That’s one of the issues with ship strikes with whales.

Ray Tudor, co-owner, Brier Island Lodge, Westport

Whale watching and wild flowers and coastal hiking and bird watching and rock hounding and general ambiance, and then – rock quarry! It just isn’t congruent. We have 30 employees ourselves, and the money stays here. There’s going to be quite a discrepancy between the owners of the quarry, what they’re taking back to the US, and what they’re actually leaving here. And we leave everything here.

Deborah Tobin, owner/operator, Summer Solstice Bed and Breakfast, Freeport

As a new tourism operator, you know, a whole other set of concerns. I hate to make the Right Whale sound like the Cash Cow after having said all that, but preservation of these animals I think also depends on local people having some concern and, as we’ve seen in many parts of the world, the animals being a tourism draw makes them more valuable to local people. So tourism is important to local people as an industry, but also as part of the conservation process. If we think people don’t notice degradation of these places, then we’re much mistaken. Because I can’t count the number of comments I’ve heard over the years from Europeans about our forestation activities along Digby Neck. We’re selling this worldwide as a pristine destination. We’re selling the Bay of Fundy as a destination that is considered to be world-wide a place where there are numerous species of rare animals and plants, and people come here expecting that. So it is definitely going to impact on the tourism product here.

Robert Keagle, summer resident, Tiverton

My wife and I recently purchased a home in Tiverton. I have read a description of the quarry project. This is a behemoth. Forty thousand tonnes to be loaded on ships per week. A huge marine terminal, complete with Many wonder what impact the quarry will have on the Bay’s whales
berthing dolphins, mooring buoys and an infrastructure to support the entire operation. Quite a sight to behold! Then there is drilling, blasting, pumping, loading, crushing, washing, screening and...spilling. All of this is known. What about the unknown? Pat and I purchased our home in Tiverton because of the uniqueness and the stunning beauty of the area. We were hooked the first time we came to the Islands. If we had known that a quarry of the magnitude of the Bilcon operation so close to our home and community was going to be constructed we would certainly have thought twice about buying. No doubt tourists will be likewise affected once this monster gets approved.

Tom Goodwin, Tiverton, owner/operator, Ocean Explorations Whale Cruises, established 1986
We frequently see the endangered Right whales both inside and outside the shipping lanes, including close to the shore (within a couple miles and several times right in Petite Passage) where these ships will come in. Reducing ship strikes has been recently identified as the number one priority in the Right whale recovery directives. For this very reason ALONE, no more large ships should be brought into the Bay of Fundy (for about half the year)! Also, who knows what long term effect the blasting could have on these very acoustically oriented animals.

Patrick Gidney, lobster and longline fisherman, Waterford
Well I think it’s going to be a disaster, myself. I know it is. Well it can’t help not be. They want to strip Digby Neck, basically, is what they want to do, don’t they? From East Ferry to Digby I suppose if they can. What’s that going to do? That’s going to completely destroy the shoreline, all the kelp, the rockweed, all the spawnin’ beds. You think a fishery of lobster is going to be anywhere’s near that? All the runoff from it, and the oil, and the stuff from dynamiting, and large ships coming and pumping their bilge water here in the Bay, what kind of parasites are they bringin’ with them? I mean it’s the same old story. Here it is, it’s just a bunch of, rich American company that’s going to take our living to pave somebody’s driveway. I think it’s going to ruin the fishery, myself. (I’ve been fishing) since I was a kid. I was fishing with my father, been aboard a boat since before I can remember. I’m 38 years old. I’ve been fishing steady for 20 years. I took over my father’s rig about 14 years ago. (And how many people fish with you?) Two to three year round; sometimes in the fall, when we’re busy, three or four guys. Plus the people that do shore work and stuff for us, and baiting trawl and everything else, in the run of a year I’ll employ 14, 15 people. On a part-time basis, a lot of them, but... I have a groundfish license, for longlining, we do that all summer. Summer and the fall. I have one son, he’ll be 18, he’s going to college in Dartmouth. And me and my girlfriend live here and she has a young son, ten years old, that lives with us. I have brothers and sisters that have kids that live here. I figure it’s going to destroy the shoreline. That’s what they want to do, they want to take the shoreline. Then what’s going to happen to the rest of Digby Neck once that’s gone, it’s going to fall into the Bay of Fundy I’ve got everything to lose. My living, house, family, everything. My whole way of life.

“I’ve got everything to lose. My living, house, family, everything. My whole way of life.”
my blood. I was brought up with it. I thought about moving away years ago and doing something else, but I started doing this full time and I like it. I guess it’s a good life, good living. That’s what this community depends on. I mean all the stores depend on the fishing, the spin-offs of the fishery, and the plants and everything else. Take the fishing away, and what do you got?

Katie Shotton, Masters with Distinction, Conservation Biology; Bay of Fundy Whale Researcher

What concerns me, I’ve heard in the past, that in their submission they said they’re going to avoid blasting and the ships coming in and out when the whales are here. And the truth of the matter is that nobody knows exactly when the whales are here and when they’re not, so it doesn’t seem possible to me to do that. And I was also under the impression that they did two or three surveys last summer. They got somebody to go, because I was actually asked if I would go and survey the whales. They went up the Digby Neck shoreline and they surveyed up there and they saw very little. The work that we’ve done has shown that the location and the number and the timing of the whales in the Bay varies hugely from year to year and day to day and month to month. There’s no way you can do three surveys like that, or four, even ten over a season and expect that to reliably show where the whales are when, because there seems to be fluctuation on quite a long time frame like maybe ten years or so, and also on a yearly time frame, and also within months and days.

Michelle Bull, Berwick and Sandy Cove

We are summer people on the Neck and go there for peace and quiet, as do many many other people, and we do not wish to hear the blasting and the noise of trucks or large ships and heavy equipment. I don’t know if these things come into the scope of this environmental assessment or not, but there seems to be no profit for anyone living in the area from this quarry. We take all the risk and the proponent gets our rock. They pay no royalties and very little in taxes, and yet they get huge profit. A few local jobs may be created, which would be helpful, but it is highly unlikely that this will counterbalance the jobs lost to the fisheries and ecotourism industries which are the economic mainstay of Digby Neck. I can think of no reason why anyone living in the area should approve this quarry just because a foreign company bought some land and wishes to profit from it. I also think that local areas should not be forced to acquiesce to such projects. In fact, I’d go further and say such projects should not be allowed unless they have the support of the people living in the area.

Vaughn Tidd, campground operator and retired Ferryman, Whale Cove

You see, my own business here, and I fished all my life before I went on the ferry, every kind of fishing there was, and watched every one of those go downhill right to nothin’. And you know, you don’t want to take the slightest chance whatsoever on anything harming the lobster fishin’ industry. That would be one of the main things, and the peace and quiet of a natural area that we’ve got here. ‘Cause we’ve got a good place, and we’re just getting started with it. I don’t know, it’s got ‘way more goin’ against it than it has for it. What I mean,
there’s nothing about it that would give jobs for
the livelihood that it might take away. And like
I say, we’ve got such a nice place here, nice and
quiet. Everything’s nice and clean and we’ve
got a pile of letters here from people, we’ve just
got an e-mail from a woman that runs a hostel
in British Columbia, she had just been talking
to her mother and
father, they’re from
Germany, and they
said that’s one of the
best parts of their
trip. They
remembered coming
here, we cooked
some lobsters for
‘em and you know
when people come to
a place like that, and
what they tell about
it, it bein’ so nice
and quiet. And
what I mean, a rock
quarry ain’t going to do nothing to help that
out.

Guy and Cornelia Melville, Freeport and
Saskatoon
An industrial initiative the scope and scale of
the Whites Point project is nothing short of an
intrusion with respect to the integrity and
sustainability of this ecosystem.

Wilfred Gidney, owner Gidney Fisheries Lobster
Pound and Fish Plant, Centreville
I have sixteen boats (that I buy from). That’s
sixteen times three, that’s 48 people. And twelve
people working in the plant. I’ve been at it for
sixty years. Sixty years. I haven’t had the
lobster pound that long, I’ve had it forty.
Well, they’re just scared of that stuff when they
 crush it. The fine stuff. They put, pump that
back in the Bay, the lobsters, it might smother
them or something. That’s what they’re saying.
Right now we’ve only got seven boats in the Bay
of Fundy, the rest are all in St. Mary’s. I say
they’re St. Mary’s, they fish St. Mary’s and
then they move over in the Bay of Fundy.
I don’t know, it might be help for someday, the
lobsters happen to play out, it makes work for
people, but you can’t take a chance on that.
One of my sons works for me all the time, and I
got one son he has a garage and he works for
me during the busy time.

Vaughn Tidd, Campground
operator, Whale Cove
I don’t see that it’s really
going to be any benefit to
us. It’ll be kind of a
hindrance to the tourism.
Most any of the tourists
that I’ve talked to, they
don’t think very much of
it. The first thing they say
is “Get that stopped just as
soon as you can”.

Bob and Pat Keagle,
summer residents, Tiverton
How foolproof will the guarantees and
assurances of Bilcon be? How do they view
environmental stewardship, if at all? Suppose
their EIS assertions are wrong. How can any
corporation mitigate major environmental
pitfalls when no one knows fully what they are?

Deborah Tobin, executive director, East Coast
Ecosystems
The Bay of Fundy is the place where more
Right Whales spend more time than any place
in the world. And this is the world’s rarest large
whale species. So that in itself in my mind
should preclude that kind of development.

Katie Shotton, Masters with Distinction,
Conservation Biology, Bay of Fundy Whale
Researcher
This place is just such an amazing place to
study. There’s so much here. And in some ways
you’ve got a lot of information on the area
already. But all that information does, in a lot
of cases, is pull up more questions that need to
be answered.
DEBORAH TOBIN INTERVIEW – January 10, 2005

Freeport
Executive Director, East Coast Ecosystems Research Organization

(East Coast Ecosystems is primarily concerned with working to conserve the North Atlantic Right Whale)

I started working with East Coast Ecosystems in 1990. We did a lot of different types of work but I think that what applies here is a lot of the work that we did was monitoring Right Whales and other marine mammals in Canadian waters. We monitored on the Scotian Shelf, but also significantly and primarily in the Bay of Fundy. Since 1992 we have run a Marine Mammal Monitoring Program on whale-watch vessels. So we have had either trained whale watch operators or our own observers aboard whale watch vessels during the entire whale watch season during those summers. And they collected data regarding sightings of all marine mammals on those times when they were on the vessels, as well as photographing any Right Whales that they encountered. So that data became part of a larger data base called the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Data Base. And that includes sightings from efforts such as using the whale watch vessels as opportunistic data collection platforms, as well as from dedicated surveys which took place from two possible platforms: either from vessels or from aircraft. And so from 1997 to 2001 we were contracted by the Canadian Federal Government to do transect surveys in the Bay of Fundy both by ship and by airplanes. We would follow track lines up and down the Bay of Fundy and count and position all animals that we see, marine animals and birds. So we did a lot of those surveys, and we did a lot of aerial surveys. And without having the data in front of me I can’t say for sure but we definitely covered June, July, August, September, October, November, December, possibly January in some years with flying. So, many months of the year. There are also sightings in the Bay of Fundy, many whale sightings recorded in the Bay of Fundy from fishermen. So our data, from all those sources, went into the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Data Base which is housed at the University of Rhode Island, and it includes data from others doing similar work in other areas. Primarily the work is about keeping track of Right Whales, but everyone who does that work also keeps track of, are basically counting any animals that they see, so the same survey could go on in Florida during the winter, or in the Bay of Fundy in November or October or September or whatever. So it all becomes, because the data is collected in the exact same way, and the same data collection protocol is used, it becomes enmeshed into one. So there’s over 25 years of data from the Bay of Fundy in that, that will show whale sightings. It was initially started by the New England Aquarium. So what we attempted to do with ours, the New England Aquarium would be in the Bay of Fundy, in the beginning years when we started, in August and September. And then we attempted to cover what we call the shoulder seasons. So the months that we knew Right Whales in particular to be present we would start surveys around the first of June and go into November, depending on the funding and weather and other things in that particular year. It differs from year to year. So the attempt was to provide coverage, surveillance coverage in the Bay of Fundy; months that we at least expected to see Right Whales, and then to increase the coverage to find out if there were indeed Right Whales there in other months that we didn’t know. I think we began to understand that it wasn’t just that there were Right Whales there during whale-watching season, but the effort was there so people were seeing them. So we were in fact quite surprised to see many, many Right Whales in late October and November, and there is at least one record of a Right Whale that was killed
in fishing gear in the Bay of Fundy in December. So there are records, whether fishing records, stranding or entanglement records, or dedicated survey records, that show Right Whales, Fin Whales, Humpback Whales, Harbour Porpoises, in the Bay of Fundy, scattered throughout, during most months of the year.

(How would they learn about sightings by fishermen?) We would often just get calls from fishermen. There are a few particular fishermen who have, for instance Harold Graham, who owns Brier Island Whale and Seabird Cruises, because he runs a whale watch, tends to be more vigilant about, and may even have some written records. Any of those guys that run whale watches tend to have their eye open more for whales. Sollows people as well. I’ve heard various comments over the years from people who have seen whales during those two months.

(When you’re up in a plane, can you identify Right Whales the same way you can from a boat?) Absolutely. In fact it’s far more efficient. We flew at about 800 feet, and at 800 feet you can see jellyfish. But the identification, the individual identification is actually much easier from the air, because when you photograph a Right Whale from a vessel, you have to get the right side of the head, the left side of the head, and then head on, if you can. And whatever else you can get. Right Whales are identified individually by roughened skin patches called callosities, so the pattern is individual. So you need to get as many photographs of as many angles of the head as possible. With the aerial shots, you’re aimed directly down on the callosity patterns, and with one shot you can often get enough of a, so it’s a really efficient, expensive but efficient way of… You don’t see as many animals as you do, a little bit of sea state can make a big difference in terms of visibility, but very, incredibly efficient.

I’ve never seen a whale around explosives. Increased ship traffic is always an issue, with any whales, anyplace, no matter what the species. We know for a fact that whales are struck by ships regularly, and we also know, certainly we know well that Right Whales, a large problem for the survival of Right Whales is ship strikes, proven by the fact that the Canadian government has got behind the idea of changing the shipping lanes. It’s documented, we know it’s a problem. So any increased shipping, it’s impossible for it not to provide (?) for whales. Just by virtue of more ships increases the likelihood of whales getting hit.

We can set out dedicated track lines and say that we think that this is where most of the whales hang out. But it’s certainly been our experience, with the flying and with shipboard, if you decide you’re going to go ten miles to the north, you’re still seeing whales. Or five miles to the east of your normal track line, you’re still seeing whales. That they are widely scattered, they seem to roam widely, even Humpbacks, back and forth to the Gulf of Maine, Bay of Fundy, the same with Right Whales, they’re all over the place. And it’s not just sort of a group hangs out in this one particular spot. Individuals roam widely. So you can have one Right Whale very far from where you would...
expect it to be. And I personally would consider you know that whole upper Bay of Fundy as critical to Right Whales, because where we are in the position of one Right Whale lost being so significant, that increasing any kind of shipping in any areas where we know Right Whales hang out… It’s very hard to keep track of them, because they do move about so much. When people were talking about moving the shipping lane in the Bay of Fundy, everyone knew that you could move the shipping lane, but you were never going to get rid of the risk of shipping to Right Whales, because of the fact that they move around so widely. So with the movement of the shipping lane you could hope to avoid large aggregations, which, generally speaking, that effort did do that. But no one expected that it would ever remove the threat of shipping to Right Whales because Right Whales don’t get out of the way of the ships. We know that to be a fact. And where you increase shipping, you increase the risk.

(Is there any conjecture why they don’t get out of the way?)

Oh all kinds, I guess. I’m assuming that some of this stuff is so well known scientifically that as soon as anybody starts investigating Right Whales in this process, surely, it’s easy to follow up on, there are theories about, people are still studying to try and understand why. They should be talking to some people at Dalhousie who have done most of the international effort in understanding that has been taking place at Dalhousie. Chris Taggart is the main name I would give you at Dalhousie. Right Whale acoustics. Try and understand what Right Whales hear, why they don’t get out of the way of ships… Nobody can say for sure at this point. I don’t think, why they don’t get out of the way of ships, but we know they don’t. And certainly Right Whales have been observed being in front, a group of Right Whales being in front of an oncoming vessel, seemingly to not respond to the noise of the vessel. But, we also know worldwide, that all species of ships are regularly hit with large ships.

(Who would be good people to talk to re: issues surrounding Right Whales?)

One perfect contact would be the President of the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium, and that’s Amy Knowlton. And she is at the New England Aquarium, and she knows everybody and what they’re doing, what the current work is, and that’s one good source of finding out what’s happening in various areas of science.

(Any other concerns other than ship strikes when I mention “quarry”?)

Well you know, you’re always going to be concerned about noise. I would be worried about, do we know enough about the effects of explosions? Sediment? These whales eat very, very, tiny, tiny food, copepods. Disruption of food production is always an issue, because they’re very specialized eaters. And if their food source is disrupted for any reason, it directly affects their ability to reproduce, which is so critical. So I think overall, my concern would be that this group follow up with the latest science. But also, quite aside from that, the Bay of Fundy is the place where more Right Whales spend more time than any place in the world. And this is the world’s rarest large whale species, and that we should be following the Precautionary Principle, and just simply offhand not even consider any kind of development that could possibly, we don’t even know enough about these Right Whales to, in the end say, ‘yeah, we can go ahead and do this and do that.’

(How many Right Whales would be seen in the Bay of Fundy in a summer?)

I wouldn’t have had a count of that for a number of years, but with the New England Aquarium’s accounting of things, I’m pretty sure that up to three quarters of the population has been seen in one summer. It’s definitely well over half. There is no place in the world where there are more Right Whales for a longer period of time than the Bay of Fundy. So that in itself in my mind should preclude
that kind of development.

(Deborah opened a Bed and Breakfast in Freeport in 2004).

As a new tourism operator, you know, a whole other set of concerns. I hate to make the Right Whale sound like the Cash Cow after having said all that, but preservation of these animals I think also depends on local people having some concern, and as we’ve seen in many parts of the world, the animals being a tourism draw makes them more valuable to local people. So tourism is important to local people as an industry, but also as part of the conservation process. People hate seals so much in fishing communities, and yet we do see whale watchers who take people out to see seals in the summer, and the people are delighted with that. I don’t know enough about seals to comment, but I would suggest that you know there are seal haul-outs all along the shores there, and what are explosions and activities of that nature going to do to… They’re certainly not rare, but they’re definitely a huge tourist attraction.

And in general, degradation. If we think people don’t notice degradation of these places, then we’re much mistaken. Because I can’t count the number of comments I’ve heard over the years from Europeans about our forestation activities along Digby Neck. We’re selling this world-wide as a pristine destination. We’re selling the Bay of Fundy as a destination that is considered to be world-wide a place where there are numerous species of rare animals and plants, and people come here expecting that, and they don’t expect to see, you know, truckloads full of rocks ahead of them on the road and they don’t expect to see the trees all cut down. So it is definitely going to impact on the tourism product here.

As a B&B operator, but also in working in whale watches for many years, Europeans come here with a very definite idea about the Bay of Fundy. They’ve researched it a lot, and they go whale watching, and they want to go hiking, and they really want to know a lot about the area. They definitely know about the Bay of Fundy. The Bay of Fundy is a pristine marine environment, they consider one of the few in the world. And that it is home to so many marine species. There is no whale watching in the world to equal the Bay of Fundy. Just the number of species that you can see in a given day during the season in the Bay of Fundy, with the small number of vessels – we think there’s a lot, there’s really not a lot of vessels there – a really clean environment, there’s nothing in the world that parallels it. And people that come here, the educated tourist from Europe who has done the research, knows that. And their expectations are high, and in most cases their expectations are more than met.

(Unless you have any other comments…?)

My main point is to get across that there is data. We went through this by the way with the NATO exercises, in 1995. NATO wanted to do exercises in the Bay of Fundy, government officials told them that they could come in June because there were no Right Whales here in June, and it turned out that there were I think ten cow-calf pairs in the Bay during that period. Which is another critical point about Right Whales is that they bring, this is a nursing ground. So it’s a very, you’re looking at a very vulnerable population of mothers and calves that are here during part of the year. So we learned, or we should have learned, a big lesson from that. That there is no safe time to bring a whole lot of ships.

**Letter from June Swift**

To Who it may concern,

I am writing this letter in response to the environmental review board that will be submitting a review for the quarry that is proposed for Whites Cove in Digby Neck. I have many environmental and social impacts questions that I would like to get answers to regarding this situation.
1. Will the intense sounds and blasts affect marine mammals in that area? Could this lead to large strandings? Example (humpback, minke, fin and right whales, harbour porpoises, atlantic white-sided dolphins, white beaked dolphins.)

2. Will the change from the dredging and blasting pollute the water ways, change the water movement and tidal currents, therefore disrupting migration routes for herring stocks, mackerel, lobster larvae, whales, dolphins, and other marine mammals?

3. Will increased shipping traffic be monitored?

Many fishermen fish in this area. With the shipping lanes being moved further over our way to reduce ship strikes to Right Whales in their nursing and feeding area, fisherman are seeing an increase of big ships into areas where they haul their fishing gear.

4. Is there a system to watch out for whales from ship strikes and ship accidents from increased traffic?

5. Has the area been thoroughly searched for *Selaginella rupestris*? This is a rare Rock Spikemoss that was recently found again by Gini Proulx, and June Swift in Centerville. (from the Flora of New Brunswick author Harold Hinds, it is extremely rare (S1) and in Roland’s flora of Nova Scotia revised by Marian (Zinck) Munro it states it is possibly extirpated from the summit of Mount Shobel’s Mountain Sandy Cove, as not seen recently. Considered rare in Nova Scotia by Pronych and Wilson (1993). Gini Proulx found the outcrop east of Centreville, on Digby Neck 2002. We further investigated and found many growing on basalt rock outcrops. Has basalt outcrops in this area been checked for this rare plant? If this plant is found what will you do to protect it?

6. Will bird migration routes and nesting habitats be disrupted?

7. How will this proposed quarry fit in with eco-tourism? What are the disadvantages and advantages for tourism in our area due to the quarry?

8. Will traffic increase? This poses a problem for the Islands due to ferry time schedules. Many businesses have scheduled whale watch tours according to the ferry. If there are large holdups due to increase traffic flow from large working vehicles from this area many may miss the ferry and therefore miss their tours. Operators will be held up or loose business. Also the wear and tear on our roads from heavy equipment and large trucks will put a strain on our main routes. Will their be funding available to fix road problems as they arise?

9. Will the water table change as time goes on from blasting in this area?

10. Will this affect the communities water supply?

11. Will the air be polluted? What types of equipment will be used to ensure pollution control?

12. How will residence way of life be affected?

June Swift
Westport
KATIE SHOTTON INTERVIEW
(Jan. 14, 2005)

Tiverton, N.S.

Master’s with Distinction, Conservation Biology
Manchester Metropolitan University, October 2004

(My studies were on) Right Whales, Humpback Whales, Fin Whales and Minke Whales, making comparisons between the four species.

What concerns me, I’ve heard in the past, that in their submission they said they’re going to avoid blasting and the ships coming in and out when the whales are here. And the truth of the matter is that nobody knows exactly when the whales are here and when they’re not, so it doesn’t seem possible to me to do that. And I was also under the impression that they did two or three surveys last summer. They got somebody to go, because I was actually asked if I would go and survey the whales. They went up the Digby Neck shoreline and they surveyed up there and they saw very little. The work that we’ve done has shown that the location and the number and the timing of the whales in the Bay varies hugely from year to year and day to day and month to month. There’s no way you can do three surveys like that, or four, even ten over a season, and expect that to reliably show where the whales are when, because there seems to be fluctuation on quite a long time frame like maybe ten years or so, and also on a yearly time frame, and also within months and days. The other thing that worries me is possible change in bottom, because it’s been shown that, where you find concentrations of whales it’s often, one of the highest relations, is between the gradient of the bottom at that point, what degree of change there is in bottom depth in that area. Either for a large degree or a small degree, depending on the species. And if they’re going to build a deep-water port there, then I would imagine there’s going to be a lot of change in bottom. And that’s going to have an effect. Like the Humpback Whales usually feed where it goes from deep water to shallow water very quickly. And then Right Whales you see out in deep water. Whichever way it works, you’re probably going to affect one or other species. And again, like years when there’s not a lot of Right Whales, there’s a lot of Humpback Whales, so even if you’re saying, “well, there’s not too many Right Whales around right now, there’s a good chance there’s going to be a lot of Humpback Whales. And with the Minke Whales, they’re the biggest question mark ever, because you see the largest number at the beginning of the season and then they drop off, and then they increase again in the middle of the whale watch season, in the middle of the summer, and then they drop off again. So at the times in which they drop off, it could be that they’re eating further up the Bay, or there’s no clear indication of migration in and out, and only here during the summer, like there is with other whale species like the Humpback and the Right Whale. So there’s a huge question mark over what’s where, when. As far as I can tell, there’s no way you could reliably say there’s not going to be whales here at this time. I had somebody actually come in the garage, I think it was two days ago, and say that the lobster fishermen off Yarmouth are seeing huge amounts

Dead whales washed up on our shores are not uncommon. This humpack had been hit by a ship.
of mackerel, just boiling at the surface, and tons and tons of whales. And it’s January, so you know you can’t say they’re not here in winter. The lobster fishermen have seen whales here at this time of year, not to the level at which you do in the summer, it’s not that they’re not here. And you’ve also got other species, like the leatherback turtle which you’ll see once in a blue moon, but very little is understood about it. And it might just be that we don’t see it that often, not that it’s not here that often. Nobody knows what they use this area for. And that’s an endangered species. And then in terms of things that we don’t know about, you’ve got the Basking Sharks as well, which very little is known about. And ship strikes seem to be a problem with Basking Sharks, too, because there’s times when a ship will report hitting something, a large animal, and the possibilities are either Right Whale or Basking Shark. And with Basking Sharks the carcasses, I don’t think, will float to the surface the same way they often do with whales. You’re not going to have that information on ship strikes. You often see Basking Sharks in the same area as Right Whales. They feed off the same food. And it has been proven without a doubt that ship strike is a big problem for Right Whales. I mean the International Maritime Organization shifted the shipping lanes because of it. There’s a huge acknowledgement there. So it seems kind of backwards to do that, and then to allow more shipping in the area because of a quarry that needs a deep-water port and is going to involve large ships coming into this area. Like on the one hand you’re saying that we need to reduce the problem of ship strikes, and on the other you’re doing something that’s likely to increase it. And so it’s likely that Basking Sharks may have similar problems that Right Whales do, and we don’t know anything about them. Basking Sharks are another species where there’s huge, huge question marks over, and they’re thought to be surrounded by a lot of the same issues as Right Whales are. I don’t know how somebody can say for sure that this will not have an impact on the huge array of species that we have here in the Bay of Fundy. I can’t see how anybody can categorically say that. Because I’ve got data from the last nine years, and I could never stand up and say that the whales aren’t going to be around.

The sound, the whole sound aspect, is something that I’d like to look into more, in more detail. I’ve looked a little bit in terms of vessel noise. I was looking at this because it’s one of the things a lot of people say about the whale watch boats, is doesn’t the noise of the boat affect the whales? And you can’t say categorically whether it does or not. And big ships, obviously, you’re going to increase the amount of noise in the area. And sound is definitely one of the ways in which whales work out what’s where, when. With large ships, one of the things that’s thought to be a problem with whales is that you get the zone of silence ahead of the ship. So it’s possible that the whales move to what they conceive is the quiet spot, away from danger - which is actually ahead of the ship, putting them in danger. Because what happens is, you’ve got the widest part of the boat is in the middle, the sound is usually generated at the back, and that sound follows the edge of the boat and travels in waves just like light. Then when it gets to the widest point, it just keeps going out. So you get this triangular area ahead of the boat where there’s not any sound, and it’s quiet, so it’s possible that the whales move into that area. That’s one of the issues with ship strikes with whales.

And from blasting, I haven’t worked specifically on blasting noise with whales, but I know there’s big problems with low frequency sound, reverberations and things like that. I can only think that it would cause problems. I can’t say for sure, but it’s definitely something that needs to be looked into in a lot more detail. And not to mention just things like the change in salt if there is any runoff. They had a problem with runoff with the small quarry they’ve got there already, didn’t they. And so if there’s any runoff I would imagine that’s going to affect whales and the fish and everything else that’s in the ecosystem there.

From my experience, in order to give assurances that these aren’t going to be issues they’re going to
need to study the whales here, or look at, a large amount of time. It’s been ten years now, I think, over ten years, that the New England Aquarium have been looking at Right Whales and their pattern of habitat use of the Bay of Fundy. And they’re still getting surprises all the time at where they see whales. And even outside the Bay of Fundy, you’re seeing whales appear in all sorts of odd areas that would never be predicted and there’s no reason why that won’t happen here.

Even with the Humpback Whale in the river, in Annapolis, I mean nobody would say that’s where you’re going to see a Humpback Whale. That just proves that you can’t say categorically well, you don’t get whales here, you don’t get whales at this time. There’s just so many question marks. The fact that the International Shipping Organization changed the shipping lanes proves that the whales are important in this area. In terms of money… there’s a book that Erich Hoyt did just in terms of the value of whale-watching, and the value of whale-watching to this area has got to be phenomenal. (Published in 2000 or 2001) I have a copy of it here. And even it would have changed since then. I mean you’ve seen the whale-watch boats are getting bigger and bigger. There’s definitely a large amount of money coming into this area from whale-watching. People that come here, like I’ve been on the whale-watch boats, and I hear people say all the time that the reason why they love this area, people who come back, is that it’s so undisturbed. You know, it’s so natural and beautiful. People get concerned when they see large ships coming up through the Bay of Fundy. If they’re out whale-watching, they always say “Is that a problem? Is that a problem?” And so even if they could prove that it wasn’t a problem, I think it would still have a negative impact on the experience that whale-watchers would have if they perceive this going on. But again I can’t see that they can prove that it won’t be a problem. There’s still the sort of visual esthetic impact of it.

That’s why I chose to live here. I can’t see if there’s a huge, great big quarry down the Neck, I probably might not have made the decision to live here, and other people might not, or be more inclined to move away, which would be a real shame.

[You’re from England originally. What is it about the Islands and the Neck that attracted you?]
Because it’s so restful and peaceful and it’s natural and undisturbed. I work in Digby at the moment, and I have a 45 minute drive up the Neck. But you’re not fighting with large trucks, or you know, there’s not large amounts of traffic. I was driving down there the other day, just after the snowfall we had. And the trees just looked so beautiful. And I just drove at 80 the whole way down; I was just like “I’m making the most of this.” ‘Cause it looked so nice. At home I’d have to commute to a big city. There’s no way a drive would be anywhere near as nice. And I find the water so relaxing, being near the water. It’s so quiet here.

[Katie’s data has not been published, but a copy of her Master’s project is available. The data belongs to East Coast Ecosystems, so permission should be obtained from them to use the material.] One of the things we’ve always said is that we want the data to be available for anybody to look at, for anyone to use. And the Right Whale, the whole of the Right Whale data is available too. It’s one of the reasons East Coast Ecosystems has been part of the Right Whale Consortium and their standardized data collection protocol, and the point of that is that you have this big data base, it covers the whole area for Right Whales, but it covers also the data collection the New England Aquarium has done on Right Whales, right from 1980-something. And you can apply to the Consortium to get that data. You do have to go through certain application procedures, and you need to be able to prove that you understand the data and can use it effectively. But that data is available, and I’m sure that those people down there, would, you know, who have a vested interest in those issues themselves because of the possible impact on the Right Whales, would be able to provide you with papers. There’s been in-depth studies on ship strikes, I’ve got some of them. Amy Knowlton does a lot of the work on ship strikes, and looking at the problems of the
potential impact on Right Whales from ship strikes. And then Moe Brown has all of the data that she’s used, that she used to get those shipping lanes changed. That’s all there, and it is available. Again, some of the processes might be a little bit intimidating, but it isn’t anything too complicated, and I can always help with that.

(The information) is definitely available and they (the proponent) can’t say “well, to the best of our knowledge this is all the information available and there’s no whales around”. There’s no way they can say that. There is data and it is available. And I’m sure there’s people who would be more than willing to say “there are lots of whales in the Bay of Fundy”. One of the interesting things with Right Whales, in the last couple of years, the numbers have decreased, but there’s no way that they can use that to say, “well, look, there’s not been so many Right Whales in the area”. That particular issue is less important, because it’s thought that it might be cyclical. When the New England Aquarium first saw Right Whales in this area, back in the late eighties, there were less Right Whales in this area; there were more out on the Scotian Shelf. And it was predominantly cow-calf pairs in this area. And then in the early nineties it shifted towards seeing all age classes, adults as well as cow-calf pairs. And you were seeing whales earlier in the season. And also you were seeing a lot more individuals. And now it seems to be shifting back. So it’s likely that it will again shift back to large numbers, so there’s some kind of cyclical process going on. So any project that’s going to have long-term impact, which this one blatantly is, you know, whether the quarry stays there or not, it’s going to have long-term impact on the eco-system, you’ve got to take things like that into consideration. And the numbers are probably going to cycle again, and they’ll come back to there being lots of whales. So any research that’s evolved in the last two years is not going to give an accurate picture.

This place is just such an amazing place to study. There’s so much here. And in some ways you’ve got a lot of information on the area already. But all that information does in a lot of cases is pull up more questions that need to be answered. So…

This one needs to be won. Even if it means me spending a good two days looking through information and stuff trying to troll up the right things, I’m more than happy to do that.

MARY SCOTT INTERVIEW- January 07, 2005
Sandy Cove, NS
Interview by Christine Callaghan
(Mary Scott suffers from asthma)

We’re not city people. We lived in Toronto and worked there for a number of years. And decided a long time ago that we were going to move here. And getting away from cities really does help (alleviate the asthma). And I think one of the concerns is what could happen with dust and other particulate matter in the air. I know we do get it from industries anyway, just because of the path of air, the movement of air in the atmosphere. But I am concerned with what would happen here, with people who are asthmatic or have some kind of pulmonary disease. And particularly for the people closer to the site. And I have always thought that there ought to be some sort of a baseline assessment done within the communities and near to the site in places.

[Of the amount of matter in the air already?]

Yes. And I think people with any obstructive disease ought to be able to have a baseline accomplished and then maintained as the work moves forward. Both young people and adults.

[Do you have any idea how prevalent respiratory problems are in your area?]

I think there’s been a reasonable amount of it. I know there are young people in Little River and children at the school that have asthma or other diseases similar, and I think it might be wise to get people in those diverse groups together to work out some sort of a path. Children and middle adults
and older adults. I think it would be pretty simple to do. [You mentioned similar kinds of diseases…?]

Well, chronic obstructive diseases as opposed to asthma or, so many older people have a problem with emphysema, or, there’s a whole range of different sorts of things that at this point are clumped under chronic obstructive disease. I know at some point, quite some time ago I talked with Linda Gregory, and she works with that sort of thing at the hospital, and I was just bending her ear to see if she had some ideas about whether there was baseline testing that could be done. She thought it would be a good idea, because it would certainly make her job harder to have more people with more severe problems. And I imagine we could get something fairly simple, basic, put together that would, possibly, use as a way of surveying people and then having a record. And I am sure there are programs already established that could possibly work.

Before we left Toronto, I found that a lot of external problems – were we near to people, were we near to more people that smoked, just being in a city I think was harder, or was it the stress of work? But I have been much better here. I’ve been taking a medication regularly for about ten years and have not had to have an antibiotic for chest infection in that time. Previously I was receiving four, five, six, seven, eight prescriptions a year. And there have been times when I’ve been able to go off that medication, for short periods of time. I think that being away from industry has helped.

[What happens to you during a really bad episode?] I just do a whole lot of wheezing. I’m just a little bit congested today, and that probably is due to walking through people smoking and such last night. It doesn’t take much to really get me rolling. I can pretty well control what I do, but I have great concern for the young people especially in the community, who have the potential for severe disease. And it would seem dreadful to me that they could not continue to live in their country communities because of imported things. I think it’s as much to look for the people in the future, and the children today, that I see concern.

“*It’s not so much for myself, but a hundred years down the road, it’s our families, it’s our heritage, our future. What about Chris Tidd’s children, and their children? They have the right, the heritage, the family traditions to be here.”*

[We should put in our written comments that it’s contingent upon the proponent to do the research on other communities with similar open pit mines and see what has happened in that particular area. How particulates in the area have been affected, and how those have affected people suffering from respiratory problems]. And I’m sure we could find a baseline somewhere, whether we do it within this community, or whether it’s from information gathered.

[But I think a baseline done in this particular community would be almost essential because then any changes could be accurately recorded.] And you know it costs an awful lot of money to take medications. The stuff I have is ninety dollars a month. And I’m fine because we have a drug plan that pays for it, but I know that there are people in the community, and that’s just one. I mean there are some people that take two and three different things. I know that there are youngsters in Digby that take a whole lot more. And that’s a huge drain on families. [And quality of life, too, I’m sure. To have to avoid certain areas or certain activities…]
Or to just take it, anyway. It isn’t good. I wouldn’t want any young person to have to do it. (The medication Mary is referring to is taken in the form of a puffer). But I guess I don’t look so much at myself as the implications for the whole of the community, and the future health of our children and their children. It’s been a concern for some time. I guess it starts out in a personal nature, but it’s not so much for myself, but a hundred years down the road, it’s our families, it’s our heritage, our future. What about Chris Tidd’s children, and their children? They have the right, the heritage, the family traditions to be here.

I know Little River is the focus point, but the things that they were saying (at the scoping session in Sandy Cove, Jan. 6th) are relevant for everybody in the wider community. And a maybe a comment like that is necessary in your report that we are really, although we’re spread out, we’re really all part of the community of the Neck and the Islands. And I think we see ourselves in some way of going beyond even that. We share the concerns of the history of everyone along that mountain, and the potential for destruction of that way of life. I think you know what I mean. It’s intense in the Little River community, but those feelings of the importance of everything – history, the whole future, really, not just ripple out from that community. Because Sandy Cove certainly feels that as well. It’s our way of life. It’s the way of life in Whale Cove. It’s the way of life in Gulliver’s Cove. It’s the whole of that community of Digby Neck and Islands. What about people up there? What about people there from Victoria Beach? My friend Jim that was there last night from Victoria Beach. He’s as involved as we are. I mean he’s on the Bay. He’s on the cliff, he’s part of that basalt. And all up through Granville Beach, Granville Ferry, all through there. That I think is essential to put in the mix as well.

(Offered to talk further to Linda Gregory).
I know it started out personal, but it really isn’t.

Letter from Tom Goodwin:

Ocean Explorations Whale Cruises
div. Marine Explorations and Research Ltd.
The maritimes’ original “ocean rafting” whale/seabird adventure
Box 719
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(902) 839-2417 fax (to email): 839-2182

12 January 2005
To Whom It May Concern:

In 1986, I came to this “special” part of the Bay of Fundy, to establish one of the first two whale-watching businesses in the area. With previous experience in Newfoundland and two university degrees, I have alot of experience and knowledge about the marine life, as well as the fifteen + years, observing these whales, seals and seabirds. Through this time, I have witnessed alot of fishing activity, and whale, seal and seabird activity all along the Digby Neck area. Some years more than others. There may be less in the past two years, but there could be a lot more in the future two (or more) years too. We frequently see the endangered Right whales both inside and outside the shipping lanes, including close to the shore (within a couple miles and several times right in Petite Passage) where these ships will come in. Reducing ship strikes has been recently identified as the number one priority in the Right whale recovery directives. For this very reason ALONE, no more large ships should be brought into the Bay of Fundy (for about half the year)! Also, who knows what long term effect the blasting could have on these very acoustically oriented animals.

The clientele that generally come to the Bay of Fundy area, are more interested in nature and science .... (“eco-tourism”) than those that visit other areas. The negative impact of a big commercial operation as proposed, would have a great impact on their perception of our area. Many, many clients from around the world have expressed their visit to the Bay of Fundy, being the highlight of their trip. The presence of such a business would probably negatively impact my
livelihood, not even including any potential “mishaps” that could occur. I believe that such an operation is a dangerous proposition for the local area.

Tom Goodwin

VAUGHN TIDD INTERVIEW, WHALE COVE – Jan. 11, 2005
Owner, Whale Cove Campground and recently retired ferry crewman (902) 834-2025

The noise is what I would worry about, and I could tell you why, I could give you a good explanation about the noise. You know, some days, it’s right nice and clear and you can hear everything, a lot better. There’s lots of times I can go outdoors here, especially you know walking around out here, you can hear just one of them little six-cylinder engines runnin’ idlin’, while they’re out there pickin’ their nets up to White’s Cove. You know, from here. (And how far is that Vaughn…) Oh, couple, three mile. Two, three miles.

I don’t see that it’s really going to be any benefit to us. It’ll be kind of a hindrance to the tourism. Most any of the tourists that I’ve talked to, they don’t think very much of it. The first thing they say is “Get that stopped just as soon as you can”.

When these big companies come in, how this all started, it all started before anybody knew anything about it.

I don’t think it would be a good thing, and if there was anything, even the slightest chance that it would do something to the lobster fishin’ industry, well they might as well shut Digby Neck and the Islands right up.

As far as any silt comin’ down and stuff, I don’t really know as that maybe would have an awful great big effect, there’s so much tide, you know, it would dilute it. But when them big ships come here, you know, they’re in ballast, and they have to pump that water overboard. And you’ve likely read all the stuff about up around Cape Breton, there, what happened there. Those little green crabs come there and it just cleaned the lobsters right out.

I don’t know, it’s got ‘way more goin’ against it than it has for it. What I mean, there’s nothing about it that would give jobs for the livelihood that it might take away. And like I say, we’ve got such a nice place here, nice and quiet. Everything’s nice and clean and we’ve got a pile of letters here from people, we’ve just got an e-mail from a woman that runs a hostel in British Columbia, she had just been talking to her mother and father, they’re from Germany, and they said that’s one of the best parts of their trip. They remembered coming here, we cooked some lobsters for ‘em and you know when people come to a place like that, and what they tell about it, it bein’ so nice and quiet. And what I mean, a rock quarry ain’t going to do nothing to help that out.

You see, my own business here, and I fished all my life before I went on the ferry, every kind of fishing there was, and watched every one of those go downhill right to nothin’. And you know, you don’t want to take the slightest chance whatsoever on anything harming the lobster fishin’ industry. That would be one of the main things, and the peace and quiet of a natural area that we’ve got here. ‘Cause we’ve got a good place, and we’re just getting started with it.

A lot of different ones gave me some advice that I really didn’t believe when I first started, like, just for instance, like it’s going to cost you four thousand dollars a lot to put a campground in. I said you’re crazy, I’m going to do it myself. When it’s all said and done, it cost a lot of money to get things a-goin’ here, and we want to try to protect it, what we can. We have fifteen sites, and this year we’re going to have two house-keeping units, and maybe possibly a camping cabin.
Email from Michelle Bull
—— Original Message ——
From: Michelle Bull
To: Andy Moir
Sent: Tuesday, January 04, 2005 11:47 AM
Subject: re. environmental impact statements

Hello, Christine: I’m afraid I can’t attend any of the meetings, but we would like to register our concerns about the following things, not necessarily in order of importance but in the order in which they occur to me:

1. Noise level. We are summer people on the Neck and go there for peace and quiet, as do many many other people, and we do not wish to hear the blasting and the noise of trucks or large ships and heavy equipment.

2. Tourism: Digby Neck is beginning to develop and establish ecotourism as a viable industry, next in importance to fishing. Having a huge quarry is not going to help ecotourism. People do not want noisy, dusty industrial sites when they go on ecotourism holidays. It is also possible that this could damage the local ecosystem to the point where whales, seabirds and fish no longer live in the area, which would also damage ecotourism.

3. Threat to wildlife: Shipping, blasting, siltation and the disposal of ballast water in the Bay of Fundy area could have serious negative impacts on whales, fish, shellfish and marine invertebrates, as well as seabirds. This is a unique ecological area and these things have unknown impacts. They could cause an ecological disaster. Just apart from the effect of this on human livelihoods and enjoyment of the area, this is a bad thing in and of itself and should not be risked.

4. Fisheries. See above. We do not know what impact these things could have on the fisheries. Fishing is still the number one industry in this area and surrounding areas and this could effectively destroy the fisheries, not only on Digby Neck but in the general Bay of Fundy area, including the U.S.A. That’s a lot of jobs to trade for 30 full time jobs in the quarry.

5. Water. We do not know what impact blasting and quarrying could have on the water table and the quality of water for people living on the Neck.

6. Landscape. I don’t know exactly how much basalt the proponents plan to remove from the area, but it seems that there is no reason for them to stop until they’ve got the Neck down to ground level. However much they take, it could make a serious difference in the topography of the Neck. Since Digby Neck is a very narrow peninsula jutting out into the Bay of Fundy, it doesn’t seem like a sensible place to put a rock quarry.

7. Miscellaneous. I don’t know if these things come into the scope of this environmental assessment or not, but there seems to be no profit for anyone living in the area from this quarry. We take all the risk and the proponent gets our rock. They pay no royalties and very little in taxes, and yet they get huge profit. A few local jobs may be created, which would be helpful, but it is highly unlikely that this will counterbalance the jobs lost to the fisheries and ecotourism industries which are the economic mainstay of Digby Neck. I can think of no reason why anyone living in the area should approve this quarry just because a foreign company bought some land and wishes to profit from it. I also think that local areas should not be forced to acquiesce to such projects. In fact, I’d go further and say such projects should not be allowed unless they have the support of the people living in the area.

8. The clause under NAFTA which requires that once imports/exports start they must be continued at at least the same level must be looked into. This has an environmental application. If we can sustain the original quarry (which, however, I do not think we can), what will happen when that is finished? Will we be forced to start a quarry elsewhere to satisfy the demands of the NAFTA treaty? This is a long term effect which must be considered.

Hoping this is helpful. Keep up the good work,
Michelle Bull, Berwick and Sandy Cove.
The Neck and Islands are “postcard perfect” in so many ways, and we’re happy to share what we have with the thousands of visitors from all over the world who come to appreciate the environment that surrounds us. We can’t imagine a postcard of a quarry would send the same message.

For further information, please contact:

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