

3 November 2009

Bill # 50

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Presentation to the Law Amendments Committee Concerning Bill 50

My name is Philip Connolly, Retired school teacher, Concerned outdoorsman, Camp lessee, President of the Chedabucto Snowmobile Club.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to this committee to share my concerns with you about Bill 50.

The Ogden-Round Lake Wilderness Protection area is where the majority of our community and surrounding areas do most of our recreation. We want to make it perfectly clear that there should be no cutting, mining, etc. but want access for wilderness recreation to enjoy the solitude, beauty and adventure it offers.

Consideration must be given to a main corridor, as the already existing road has been there for over fifty years, with very little environmental impact, because of the hardwood ground, not boggy. I am very familiar with this particular area since I have been going in there for over fifty years, first with my father as a very young boy, and many years since with my father, my brothers and my sons. My father, Kenneth Connolly, who is approaching 85 years of age, did logging in that area over 50 years ago. The existing access road that goes from Guysborough Intervale through the protected area to North Ogden has been used by many people over the years with minimal environmental impact. This land contains a great deal of hardwood and is beautiful to see.

All stakeholders must be considered for wilderness recreation; such as walkers, hikers, canoers, cross-country skiers, snowshoers, traditional hunters and recreational fishermen, four-wheelers, snowmobilers, and camp lease holders.

Snowmobiles cause little or no environmental impact traveling over deep snow and should be given serious consideration for traveling on the existing trails as they have been doing for many years. We have a newly formed snowmobile club called "Chedabucto Snowmobile Club" that was voted in for membership in the Snowmobilers Association of Nova Scotia. The Antigonish and Pictou Snowmobile Club spoke out strongly in support of our application because they want to continue to develop trails through to Cape Breton via Aulds Cove. With snowmobile season fast approaching, members want to know if the trails are still open like they were last year. We had special permission from government to travel over the snow, as there was **no environmental damage on our existing trail system.**

Implicit in the *Act*, the *Report of the Public Review Committee for the Proposed Systems Plan for Parks and Protected Areas in Nova Scotia*, and the *Report of the Voluntary Planning Committee of 2009*, is the **central theme of traditional use, existing trails and local involvement.**

I am wondering if it would be possible to have the moratorium on vehicle travel lifted until the final report on the Management Plan is in place. If government follows its own stated objectives of traditional use and local culture, a complete ban on vehicle travel may not be applicable at all.

On a more personal note, I have a campsite lease on Three-Cornered Lake for over sixteen years now, and must travel over a small portion of the Wilderness Protected Area to get to the camp. I have a great love for this area and see myself taking an environmental stewardship role in ensuring that the Ogden-Round Lake Wilderness Protection Area retains the natural and recreational beauty it deserves.

We cannot treat all thirty-one protected areas the same and I quote from the *Report of the Voluntary Planning Committee*, **"One-size-fits-all policies will not work due to this province's diverse natural, economic and socio-cultural composition. Policy should reflect the local conditions; the Department of Natural Resources should be prepared to accommodate or customize policies in the context of an overall provincial framework."**

I have a blueprint management plan for travel on the wilderness protection area that I think will be acceptable to all stakeholders. Enclosed is a map that shows the trails we must allow to grow wild, which are outlined in green. Traditional use, TransCanada Trail, and Camp Lease Trails are outlined in red. Designated snowmobile trails are outlined in blue, and these would be closed when the snow goes.

I strongly feel that there is a resolution that will be acceptable by all and anxiously await a decision that is for the people in rural communities. If you require any more information or assistance, I am more than willing to do my part. Please contact me at 902-533-2603 or email me at philip.connolly@ns.sympatico.ca.

Yours sincerely,

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