



Directors' Report for the Year Ending December 31, 2015
Annual General Meeting
March 20, 2016

It's amazing to me how fast a year goes by as here we are again! Oh well, it'll soon be Christmas...

Our efforts at securing a community forest on the Crown Land on the Porter Road have come to an end. As reported last year, we were turned down flat and although our MLA Karla MacFarlane has tried to keep the issue alive with the Minister of Natural Resources, the Board will no longer invest time in directly engaging the government in this discussion. We will however keep a close eye on the property as we share a boundary line with them. As a Board, it has been difficult to accept that we were unable to achieve a partnership with the province to develop a community forest project there, but we have determined that we will use the Crown Land as an opportunity for education. Given that the land sits directly next to FRS land, it will be a direct opportunity to showcase the difference between the land relationship model of our Society and the land management model of industrial forestry and its partner the Crown. To that end several Board members, Billy, Joella and David have spent some time on that land, making some photo documentary of its existing condition. PHP has assured us through their operations supervisor, Reg Delorey that they will inform us beforehand of any expected work. I truly believe that they are concerned about our presence and don't want any unwanted publicity. Nothing has happened up there since we began this process three years ago, last winter being too snow filled and this year too wet and soft. I expect this year, 2016, will see something underway. We will keep you informed.

As part of our Network Development, we've joined the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators Association (NSWOOA) as an associate member. The NSWOOA is Nova Scotia's pre-eminent environmentally concerned woodlot owner group and I particularly feel this is a good association for FRS.

Last year's AGM had Wade Prest make a presentation on the Otter Pond Demonstration Forest (OPDF) located at Mooseland in HRM. OPDF is a community-based demonstration forest on approximately 1,600 acres of Crown Land. FRS can benefit from their experience and to that end your board visited this place on October 3, 2015. FRS members were offered the opportunity to participate but Directors only made the trip. Although a cold, damp day, we were warmly welcomed by Wade and Mike Murray and given a brief tour of the property and their newly constructed structure. Wade spoke of the effort required and the ever-present DNR oversight, no small task.

The Talking Forests educational series continues. In early March Joella and Billy took a group to the forest for a "Winter Tracking" event and again in August for a "Night Walk". We also held the 6th annual, year-end Grenzgang or "Border Walk". Grenzgang is a German tradition that we

have adopted as a way of celebrating the living forest and web of life that has been sustained because of our work together as a community.

Some proposed workdays were postponed for various reasons. Last year's snow load took its' toll.

Craig's Way footpath has seen positive activity including use by local community and school groups. A new bridge went in as well as a sign-in book with box at the MacBeth Road trail head. Regular maintenance is ongoing.

The big news to report is a \$5,000.00 grant that FRS has received from Sage Environmental Program. We began with a larger ask, but had to tone it down as their funding dictated. This funding is going to allow FRS to begin some on-the-ground work on a piece of FRS land. Lot 2 comprises approximately 80 acres of our 314 in total and is going to be the basis for our first permaculture project. A side note is that the Lot 2 name is severely lacking and perhaps asking our younger members for a replacement might be a fun event. We've retained the services of Picea Forestry Consulting to provide us with an Ecological Forest Classification of this parcel, which is basically an inventory of the flora, water, soil and their interconnectivity. Volumes of wood, maps and some recommendations will also be included. A permaculture plan will follow and may use up this first round of funding. Annie Ferguson, John Hatchard and Jonas Klum (Volker's son) have volunteered to conduct a Topographical Survey Project on this property which will map elevations, water and access roads and be compatible with the ecological forestry classification maps.

After this first work, which will give us the grounding necessary for continued effort, we'll be applying to Sage for more funding to help in the implementation of these plans. FRS will be expected to provide "in-kind" support to the project as well and this is where members and friends will come in. We foresee a road, parking area and structure of some sort for future gatherings. The planning work will take place in the Spring/early Summer with some work days planned for the cooler Autumn days. Stay tuned for reports on this very exciting initiative. FINALLY, we're getting to engage again with the land!

A Board meeting in November highlighted concerns around hunters and non-hunters using Craig's Way. Several board members agreed to put together a "Hunting Awareness" guide with a section on our website and signage on FRS lands for the upcoming hunting season. Cooperation between all parties will be the hoped for result.

2015 saw the Board meet 9 times with one special General meeting and the AGM. Each year a "Christmas Party" is held, the two I've attended were at Bernadette's house on her "little piece of paradise" near River John. This is a potluck affair, which, in my view, makes a real added bonus to being a Board member. The food and friendship are second to none.

Thank you for the privilege and pleasure to serve as your Chairman.

Tom Miller, Chair
On behalf of the Board of Directors