



Directors' Report
Annual General Meeting
March 10, 2012

Reading through the report prepared for last year's Annual Meeting I was struck by just what a different year 2011 has been. 2010 was a whirlwind of activities and efforts, all carried out in an atmosphere of great urgency, and the fear that we might not be successful in saving the land. In contrast in 2011 we heaved a collective sigh of relief, secure in the knowledge that although we still faced a considerable fundraising challenge, the land with all its non-human inhabitants was safe.

Sadly, this joy was tempered by the pain of seeing the destruction wrought upon other lands, lands which adjoined our FRS lands. The first assault occurred last winter, on the adjoining lands of Wagner Forest. Despite our advocacy for these lands, Wagner would not spare them, although it did make some attempt to lessen the destruction. The second assault came out of the blue on the lands along our northern boundary. In late summer, with no regard for all the woodland creatures and their youngsters living throughout this forest, a large area was decimated, including all the large hemlocks along our common border. These devastated landscapes bear silent witness to industrial forestry's war on our forests. They are a constant reminder of the fate that awaited FRS lands if we had not been successful.

It is easy to get depressed and discouraged when faced with the on going destruction throughout our rural communities. But 2011 has been a time of hope too. With the land secured, FRS began its creation of Craig's Way, a true labour of love. The Craig's Way committee was struck in January and discussion took place at the Annual General Meeting last March. Throughout the year, we spent much time on the land until finally the route was determined. Under Billy's leadership and with the support of many faithful trail builders, including many of Craig's family and friends, the main loop of Craig's Way is now marked and being used both formally and informally. Walking through this beautiful forest is a truly moving and enriching experience. Billy will be speaking about Craig's Way later in the meeting.

The Board of Directors continues to meet at a minimum of once a month. Throughout 2011 we had 8 Directors, with the addition of Catherine Hughes. Catherine had committed to serve for at least one year, which she has done and has indicated that she is not able to continue for another year. Catherine has brought her writing skills and many ideas, much energy and lots of discussion to our Board meetings. We shall miss her, and we look forward to her continued interest and involvement with FRS. One of our long serving Directors has also bid the Board adieu. Nancy Hanlon, who joined us in 2008, will not be with us as a Director this year, but we know she will continue to be a very welcome presence in FRS into the future. It just won't be the same without our multi-talented Nancy to take on and successfully follow through on those myriad tasks. Thank you to both Nancy and Catherine for all their work for FRS.

We talked for hours and hours at Board meetings throughout 2011. Every meeting involved discussion of Craig's Way as well as brainstorming and developing fundraising ideas. Fortunately we continued to receive donations and we had some successful fundraisers, which have brought us very close to being debt-free. Details of the fundraising will be forth coming in a

report prepared by Nancy Hanlon, which I shall present after this report.

Numerous other issues presented themselves throughout the year, because now that we had secured the land we had decisions to make and responsibilities to fulfill. One issue that continued to draw our attention was how to achieve effective two-way communication with our members. As I noted at the end of my 2010 Annual Report, we need our members to contribute to developing our vision, our policies and our projects so that together we can fulfill the stated objects of FRS. This remains a priority for the Board. As more groups and individuals approach us with requests or proposals the Board of Directors needs a mechanism for ensuring the FRS is developing an identity that reflects its membership and not just the individuals serving on the Board.

It is beyond the scope of this Report to speak in detail of the many issues that have come to our attention over the past year, but I shall briefly list a number of them, in no particular order.

- Questions have been asked about our position on hunting on the land;
- Concerns have been expressed over unauthorized ATVs and vehicles on the pipeline easement, which goes through the land;
- Decisions must be made on the relationship of FRS with the local snowmobile club in regard to their trail which goes through the land;
- There needs to be discussion of possible low-impact forestry or other collection activities on the land, or the creation of a demonstration woodlot;
- We need to consider the role of FRS in various issues in the wider community that have the potential to impact FRS land, like shale gas extraction and wind turbine development. Earlier, for example, the Board released a position statement on hydraulic fracturing;
- We need to consider the role (if any) that FRS can play in public education; for example, the Board has declined to take an active role in the province's current 12% protection initiative, because of our concerns about what is happening to the other 88%;
- We may wish to consider policies which assist FRS members and supporters in extending FRS principles to their own activities, for e.g. in using their own woodlot, buying firewood, etc;
- We may wish to investigate alternative ways to receive benefits from the land which reflect the environmental services provided by protecting rather than destroying forests;
- We may wish to seek funding (or not) for creating management plans, inventories and so on of FRS lands;
- We may wish to explore possible partnerships for current FRS land or for land we may acquire or gain control of in the future.

In regard to this last item, I can tell you that we have initiated a dialogue with our MLA and his Department of Natural Resources concerning two parcels of Crown Land adjoining our FRS lands. These parcels are subject to a fifty-year lease between the Crown and the former pulp mill in Port Hawkesbury. This lease is due to expire and we have made it clear that we want these parcels taken out of any lease renewal offered as part of the current negotiations with prospective buyers for the mill. We have indicated that we are willing to explore any options that will keep these parcels out of the control of the pulp mill.

I bring all these issues to your attention to give you a sense of what we have been thinking about and why we need input from our members. To start this discussion we have prepared a preliminary questionnaire that you can complete and hopefully many of the items I have mentioned will generate discussion in our Q&A session and focus groups today.

During 2011, the Board approved a Statement of Guiding Principles which is found on our website and also attached to this report. The Board was also moved to seek permission from FRS member Joella Arsenault to put her poem expressing her response to clear cutting on our website. This poem speaks to our distress of the destruction all around us. This destruction was also captured by Mark Brennan in his recent video which he generously provided for our website. Thank you to both Joella and Mark.

The Board has been trying throughout the year to address the issue of liability as it relates to our ownership and use of our land. This is more complicated than it seemed at first glance, and when we come to some conclusions about this matter we shall be making our recommendations to members.

FRS is now 5 years old. This AGM marks the end of the term of the incorporating Directors. It has been an exciting and fruitful five years. As I conclude this Report, we would like to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of our solicitor Ian MacLean for always being willing to take our calls and share his knowledge. We would also like to acknowledge with thanks the willingness of Trudy Watts for her continued help with our Annual Meeting. We also extend thanks to former Director Charlie Kennedy for emceeding last years AGM so competently and to Jamie Simpson for so generously accepting the call to be our guest speaker in 2011 and providing an excellent and well-received presentation and discussion.

And lastly, we wish to thank our members for their continued support. We want to reiterate to all of you that you have the right to be involved in FRS. Not only are members entitled and encouraged to attend any of our Board meetings, you can request minutes of our meetings and you can comment on anything you see on our website or in the various communications you receive electronically. As well, there is always work to be done and we welcome all the help we can get.