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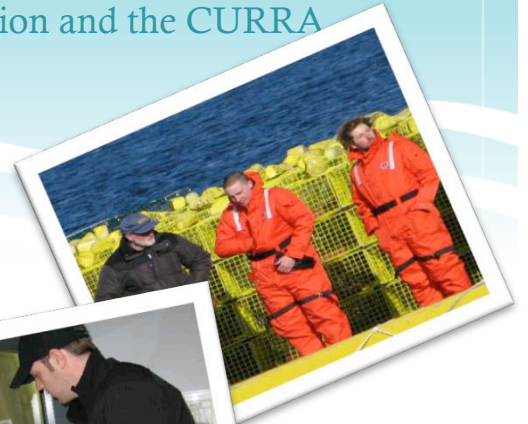
The

Western Shorefast

A joint newsletter of the Bonne Bay Marine Station and the CURRA

The Western Shorefast is produced four times a year at the Bonne Bay Marine Station by the CURRA Community Coordinator, with input from the Director and Manager of the Marine Station. Hyperlinks to relevant Internet sites are embedded within the text. *The Western Shorefast* is distributed within communities in the Western region of Newfoundland and Labrador with the assistance of our [community partners](#). It aims to keep local communities informed of the work that is being carried out by CURRA researchers throughout the region and by scientists and students at the Bonne Bay Marine Station. Like a shorefast joins a net to the shore, it links the community to the research activity in the region.

We welcome feedback from all our readers. Drop us a line if you have questions about our research or if you have ideas for articles you would like to see in future issues of *The Western Shorefast*.



Spring brings a new crop of students to Bonne Bay

Bonne Bay Marine Station welcomed its first group of students just a while ago. They will be conducting research in various locations under the supervision of Dr. Bob Hooper. They are researching such varied topics as wolffish, young lobsters, marine kelps, youth employment, and a wide range of others.

Trails, Tales and Tunes Community Festival

TTT Festival May 15-24

Enjoy a unique blend of daytime walks in spectacular Gros Morne National Park, afternoon workshops with artists and photographers, and evening entertainment by very talented musicians and storytellers performed in churches, halls, theatres and pubs throughout Norris Point.

Celebrate the Sea Day May 23

Join us at the Marine Station for Celebrate the Sea Day on Saturday, May 23. Visit our web site for a schedule of really fun and informative family activities:

<http://www.trailstalestunes.ca/celebratethesea.html>

CURRA researchers



Jennifer Dawe

Jennifer Dawe, a graduate student in Environmental Science, will conduct interviews with fish harvesters in the region and will review the process that led to the wolffish being listed as an endangered species. Jennifer worked as an interpreter at the Bonne Bay Marine Station during the summer of 2008, where she provided marine biology tours and first became interested in what fish harvesters thought of wolffish. Jennifer will be in Bonne Bay until September.

Ted Norman

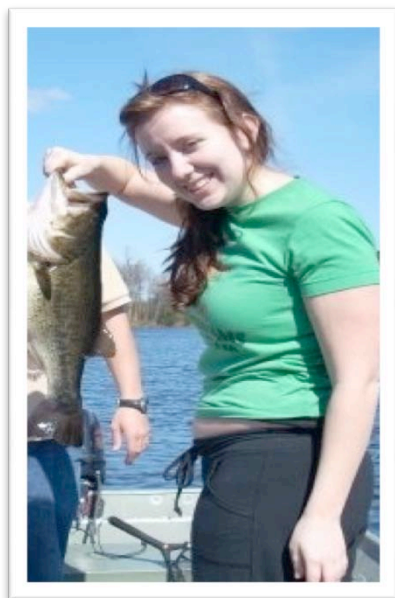
Ted is a research assistant with the rural youth component of the CURRA project. He will be in the field from April 27 to June 26, and he will be meeting with and talking to youth about the kinds of employment options available to them in the region; their work, school and leisure experiences; and their thoughts on living in rural communities in Newfoundland. Ted will be working closely with Vanessa Farrell, Regional Coordinator of the Community Youth Network in Port aux Basques. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in Socio-cultural Studies of Physical Activity and Health at the University of Toronto.

FISH HEADS WANTED

Michelle is a Master's candidate at Memorial University. You may see her around Gros Morne this summer catching fish or wading around in rivers, but do not be alarmed! She is conducting research on sea-run brook trout (or sea trout) migration for her master's thesis and she needs your help! She and her assistants will be using receivers and tags to track brook trout in the Bonne Bay fjord and Western Brook Pond. So if you catch a fish with a fin clip or you pick up a receiver, please throw it back or call us at the Bonne Bay Marine Station. Also, she is looking for recreational brook trout anglers to complete surveys that will help with catch information. Are you interested in angling with Michelle's team or donating fish heads to a good cause? If you're interested in helping out, please contact Michelle at the Station (458-2550 or mcaputo@mun.ca).



Michelle Caputo





Kristen Lowitt will begin working with the CURRA program this summer on a participatory action research project about food security and fisheries in the Bonne Bay area. This project will explore the need and capacity for fisheries to contribute to a sustainable community food system in this region. She will be in Bonne Bay over the summer to do some background research and meet with local community groups and individuals to get input into the design of this action research project. This research will also form the basis of her Interdisciplinary PhD program to begin in September. Kristen's background is in community food systems development, and she has a Master of Environmental Studies degree from Dalhousie University.

Kurt Korneski is a historian and a postdoctoral fellow working with the governance component of the CURRA. He is studying the history of three novel marine governance initiatives in western Newfoundland. These governance initiatives occurred in St. Paul's in the 1970s, where they involved efforts by local harvesters to protect their herring stocks; in the Labrador Straits, where harvesters and others worked together to have an area closed to scallop dragging; and in Trout River where harvesters have created a voluntary closed area for lobsters. During the summer of 2009, Kurt will interview local fishers and others to learn about the history of each of these conservation initiatives.

Kurt Korneski



Pierre LeBlanc



Artist and Grenfell faculty member Pierre LeBlanc looked at fish plants both as industrial structures, central to rural communities and as sites for the development of community-based, socio-political activity. He hopes that the resulting photo essay and exhibit will promote discussions about the potential role of fish plants in the recovery of local economies. Visit his web site and blog site to learn more: <http://fishplants.blogspot.com/>



Celebrating and Building on our Strengths: Our Resources, Our Values, Our Future in St. Paul's

“Celebrating Our Strengths” was a public meeting on the evening of December 9th, 2008 where the whole community of St. Paul's was invited to come to the Town Hall to hear about some of the research taking place in their community.

“Building on Our Strengths” was a facilitated workshop that took place the next day, enabling a more focused discussion with key community members, government officials, and community-based organizations on future research-related needs in the St. Paul's area and ways to meet those needs.

Visit http://www.bonnebay.ca/curra/documents/workshop_summary.pdf for a full report of the meetings in St. Paul's.

Wolffish: Species at Risk



In 2007 Intervale produced a DVD about wolffish in Newfoundland, with the help of Vidraft Productions of Corner Brook and funding from the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and from Dr. Barb Neis's Trudeau Fellowship Award. The DVD has been used in harvester workshops and in classrooms across the province to promote better understanding of the ecological requirements of wolffish. Copies of the DVD are available at cost from Intervale (contact [Kathleen Blanchard](#)). A video stream of this DVD may be viewed at (http://www.oceanicresearch.org/education/films/wolffish_film.htm).



Lobster Research

My name is Victoria Burdett-Coutts and I am a graduate student at Memorial University. I have been conducting research in Bonne Bay for

the past three summers on the early life stages of the American lobster, the variety of lobster most commonly found in this region. They range from southern Labrador to Cape Hatteras, the majority of the fishery occurring in Maine and Nova Scotia. However, they represent a very lucrative and important fishery in this province.

Young lobsters are brooded on their mothers for approximately 10 months, then they hatch and spend four to six weeks in the upper layers of the water column (pelagic). During this time they go through larval stages, the fourth of which is a post larval stage when they begin to be recognizable as lobsters. It is during this stage that they settle to the bottom, staying hidden in structurally complex habitats such as cobble and boulder. On the west coast of Newfoundland, young lobsters begin hatching in mid to late June and will likely settle to the bottom in the fall. In our climate it'll be another seven to ten years before one of these lobsters ends up on your plate.

During my time in Bonne Bay I was conducting surveys to determine the temporal and spatial distribution of the various stages of the lobster. Scientifically this is termed source-sink dynamics, the source being the place where the lobster are hatched from their mother and the sink being the place where they settle back to the ocean floor after some time in the water column. Understanding such phenomena is an important goal of ecology.

In order to increase my understanding I wanted to determine the abundance and distribution of a) the mothers carrying eggs (locally called spawny lobsters) b) the distribution of the pelagic larvae and c) the distribution of the recently settled (young-of-year) lobsters. In order to determine the distribution of the adult lobsters I surveyed the area by accompanying fishers during the lobster season to measure the females and map their locations. I conducted surveys in different parts of the Bay throughout the summer using a neuston net that tows the top metre of the water column.

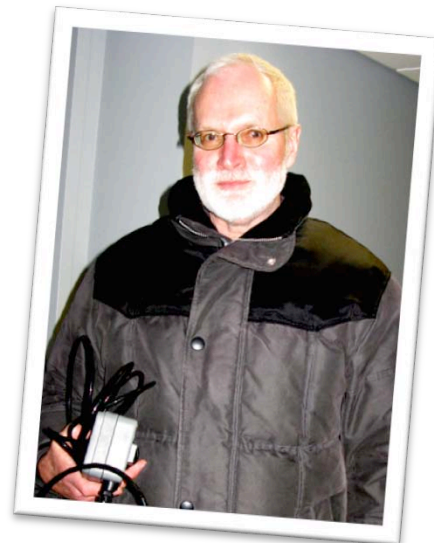
With my colleagues, I conducted fall surveys to determine the distribution of the recently settled young lobsters. SCUBA surveys were conducted in various parts of the Bay by selecting areas that had cobble boulder habitat and searching under the rocks. We had placed settlement trays earlier in the season, which were also collected in the fall, in order to assess the settlement of lobsters with a second method. Settlement trays are small containers made out of lobster trap wire and lined with mesh. These trays were filled with beach cobble to attract young lobsters and placed in various parts of Bonne Bay. This component of my research is part of a larger collaboration with scientists across much of the range of the American lobster to understand the variations in young lobsters across broad regional scales.

A large part of my research required the collaboration and participation of the lobster fishers of Bonne Bay. For much of my research I was also dependent on their assistance for conducting my neuston net surveys and placing my settlement trays. This was an excellent experience and broadened my understanding of the lobster fishery. I will continue interviewing them to acquire their knowledge of the fishing grounds so that together we can achieve an integration of science and fisher knowledge.

BBMS & CURRA Staff, Norris Point

Dr. Hooper is the Director of the Bonne Bay Marine Station and its programs and also an executive member of the CURRA. He is a marine biologist with interest in seaweeds, invertebrates and fish communities living together on the seabed. He is currently studying sea urchins, snow crabs, wolffish and seaweeds and applying biological information to the management of these species and to developing integrated aquaculture methods for sea urchins and seaweeds. He monitors selected Newfoundland systems for environmental impacts and climatic changes.

Bob Hooper



Dennis Rumbolt and Joyce Maynard

Dennis Rumbolt is the maintenance technician of the Bonne Bay Marine Station. He is responsible for keeping the station and its systems running smoothly throughout the year. Joyce Maynard is the custodian who keeps the station spotlessly clean. Dennis and Joyce are employees of the Gros Morne Cooperating Association (GMCA)

Fiona has teaching, diving, public education, and administrative experience with Memorial's Biology Department and Ocean Sciences Centre. Her research experience includes an M.Sc. in invertebrate ecology and research projects on nematodes and sea urchins. Fiona has a keen interest in Public Education and is responsible for public displays and programs at the station. She also acts as research liaison, and manages residential, financial, and personnel functions for the Bonne Bay Marine Station.

Fiona Cuthbert



Anita Best

Since January, Anita has been working with the CURRA as Community Coordinator. She is responsible for the quarterly newsletter, coordinating meetings and educational programs with our community partners and bringing information about the CURRA and the station to the public.



Trading Books for Boats—Environmental Education in Action

Led by Fiona Cuthbert, Manager, Bonne Bay Marine Station

Trading Books for Boats is an experiential learning program offered to Grade 9 students of the Western School District. The program addresses the issue of environmental quality, particularly human impacts on water quality. The main philosophy of the program is that students learn by doing and that learning should be focused on their local environment. Each fall approximately 600 students from 17 schools in western Newfoundland attend the Books for Boats program. Students from Trout River to Port Saunders attend the program at Memorial University's Bonne Bay Marine Station.

The highlight of the daylong program is a boat trip on Bonne Bay. Students learn about the formation of the bay, and how to read a marine chart. Students have the opportunity to conduct their own water quality tests, measuring water temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH and turbidity. Live plankton is collected for observation under the microscope. Data is recorded and compiled in charts made available to students and teachers through the Bonne Bay Marine Station website.

Back in the station's science laboratories students use workbooks to guide themselves through a series of learning stations. Topics addressed include the importance of plankton, municipal wastewater treatment, oil spill prevention and remediation, marine debris, and local coastal activities impacting environmental quality. Students conduct experiments, make observations, and record findings in their workbook.

At the close of the day's activities, students participate in a wrap-up session that consolidates what they have learned and



provides useful feedback for teachers and program organizers.

In 2009 the Bonne Bay Marine Station will work with the Western School District and ACAP Humber Arm Environmental Association to modify and adapt the Trading Books for Boats program to connect with the new Grade 8 science curriculum, focusing on water systems on the earth's surface and human impacts on marine systems.

With support from our community partners BonTours, the Red Ochre Regional Board – Integrated Coastal Zone Management Steering Committee, Memorial University's CURRA initiative, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Gros Morne Co-operating Association, approximately 150 Grade 8 and 9 students will have the opportunity to experience the program in Bonne Bay this September. Students from Main River Academy and Hampden Academy will join the program in Bonne Bay. The Bonne Bay Marine Station will also take the lead in piloting the program in St. Anthony for students from Plum Point to Englee.

For further information on the Books for Boats in Bonne Bay program contact Fiona Cuthbert at fcuthber@mun.ca.



Career opportunities in the oceans sector have never been greater.

That was the message students received as they met with employers and industry representatives from the marine transportation, ocean technology, aquaculture and food sectors at the Marine Institute (MI) 7th Annual Career Fair. Employers from across Canada lined up to meet the institute's outstanding students, graduates and alumni as they highlighted the endless opportunities that existed and discussed the latest industry developments in their field.

Starting September 2009, new diploma students with an 80 per cent scholarship average or greater will receive a minimum of \$1,000. Students starting their advanced diploma in water quality, sustainable aquaculture, food safety or integrated coastal and ocean management will also receive \$1,000 with an undergraduate cumulative average of 75 per cent or greater. Visit the MI web site at www.mi.mun.ca

Community Notes

The Fisheries Heritage Preservation Program is a short term, small project grant program for the owners of historic fisheries buildings. Grants are available for restoring the built heritage features using traditional materials and designs. Eligible items include exterior work to repair, preserve, stabilize and protect stages, stores, equipment lofts and other related structures. The Fisheries Heritage Preservation Program is meant for conserving historic fisheries structures only, and not for upgrading, building or maintaining new structures.

Municipalities or local heritage organizations can apply for a project that involves multiple structures coordinated by that group. Individual projects qualify for a grant valued up to \$2000. Community-based projects qualify for a grant valued up to \$10,000.

The deadline for submissions to this program for 2009 is Friday, May 22. Visit the Heritage Foundation web site to get the guidelines and download an application.

<http://www.fisheriesheritage.ca/programInformation.asp>

Stewardship in Action: Snow Crab Closure in 12G (Cape St. Gregory to Broom Point)

On January 13th, and February 13th, 2009 meetings were held in Rocky Harbour with snow crab management area 12G harvesters and two members of the FFAW/CAW (Area Representative Roland Hedderson and Stewardship Advocate Perry Rumbolt). These meetings were to discuss concerns harvesters had expressed regarding the health of the stock. Six harvesters were chosen from Trout River to Sally's Cove to attend the meeting. A snow crab steering committee was formed consisting of the harvesters in attendance and the inshore council member for the area. This committee sent out ballots to all the fish harvesters involved with the snow crab fishery in the area, which stretches from Cape St. Gregory to Broom Point, to obtain their opinions regarding a possible closure of this fishery. After all the ballots were counted, 68% voted in favour of a closure for the 12G snow crab fishery for 2 years. The committee received the necessary mandate to deliver a proposal to DFO for the 12G snow crab fishery closure.



Photo courtesy fisheries and Oceans Canada

UPCOMING RESEARCH

Understanding more about deep-sea coral ecosystems is essential to discerning our impact on the underwater

"In the past few years there has been an increased interest in deep-sea corals in Atlantic Canada due to the impacts of bottom fishing on deep-sea coral ecosystems.

Bottom fishing threatens deep-sea coral in terms of mechanical damage, habitat alteration and coral bycatch. Despite increased awareness, little is known about the deep-sea corals in the Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

I am using a combination of DFO survey trawl records, fisheries observer bycatch records and local ecological knowledge (LEK) to map the distribution and assess the conservation status of deep-sea corals in the Northern Gulf."

Emile Colpron is a graduate student with CURRA

In the proposal harvesters outlined conditions which they deemed necessary in order for the closure to go forward and DFO was asked not to consider the proposal if they could not formally commit to the conditions. These conditions were: an assurance that the closure would only be in effect for the two seasons (2009-2010) that was agreed upon through the vote; during the closure, harvesters have to be assured that they would retain their snow crab license and that they would not have to pay a license fee during the closure; and finally, when the area reopens, harvesters want to be guaranteed that the snow crab allocation for 12G would be divided equally between all license holders. Based on these conditions and under the direction of the 12G snow crab committee, a proposal was written and submitted to DFO for review. The proposal was accepted at the end of March, 2009.

This pro-active stance taken by fish harvesters in the region indicates their awareness of conservation issues and their willingness to take action when they think it necessary. They have proven themselves to be good stewards of the snow crab resource.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOBSTER RESEARCH

On March 9, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) announced an award for work on sustainable lobster fisheries research on the west coast of Newfoundland. The award is associated with the CURRA project. The research activity under the NSERC award will include field work and the development of population dynamics models to quantify the effect of conservation initiatives such as marine protected areas, v-notching, and release of the largest and most productive females. There are opportunities in this project for summer students in 2009, for MSc students beginning in 2009 and 2010, for honors students in 2009 and 2010, and for a postdoc beginning in 2009. For more information contact: Kate Wilke, KMWilke@mun.ca, 709.737.8833 OR David Schneider, David.Schneider@mun.ca, 709.737.8841. More information can be obtained at these websites: <http://www.mun.ca/biology/dschneider/>, <http://www.mun.ca/osc/dschneider/bio.php>

Local ecological knowledge research

On February 5 and 6 the CURRA sponsored a workshop at Memorial University in St. John's that explored a range of methodological approaches and issues related to Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) research. It is widely acknowledged that fish harvesters have important and valuable knowledge that can contribute to understanding the history and dynamics of marine ecosystems and fisheries. On the management side, they have extensive knowledge about how things work and have worked locally, as well as about alternative management approaches.

Workshop participants were primarily Memorial University graduate students interested in LEK research, CURRA faculty members and a representative from the Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW) Science Research group, Sherry Glynn. Presenters included CURRA researchers Barb Neis and Grant Murray as well as guest speakers (joining by video conference) Teresa Johnson, Kevin St. Martin, and Steve Sutton from the Universities of Maine, Rutgers University in New Jersey and James Cook University in Australia.

Proceedings opened with presentations on a range of different methodologies for doing LEK research and different approaches to combining LEK and science. Then, using these presentations as a starting point, they explored some of the ethical and other issues related to research of this kind and discussed some of the opportunities, risks and challenges associated with efforts to integrate both fish harvesters and their knowledge into fisheries science and management.

On the second day, Sherry Glynn talked about the FFAW's TEK project with offshore fish harvesters in the Northern Gulf (headed up by Loomis Way) and the CURRA students presented an overview of the known natural and environmental history of the species they will be studying, as well as their research questions and any preliminary ideas they have about the best way to answer these questions using LEK and Science.

I think the value of these kinds of meetings lies in helping team members move from the abstract/theoretical to implementation of their ideas in applied research projects. With such a large and diverse research team, it also provides a venue for updating team members about what we are all doing, and sharing insights, challenges and lessons learned. This one was particularly helpful for me to see how the relatively broad objectives and questions of the proposal are taking form and how they will be realized in the field. The timing at the beginning of the research for most of the students is particularly helpful as it may help orient them to some of the challenges – and opportunities – of doing this sort of research.



Grant Murray holds the Canada Research Chair in Coastal Resource Management at Vancouver Island University in British Columbia.

Colonies of Marine Invertebrates

The European bryozoan *Membranipora membranacea* was introduced to the coast of Newfoundland in the early 2000s, presumably by ships' ballast water. In the northwestern North Atlantic, the planktonic larvae of this tiny marine invertebrate (adults measure less than 1 mm) settle on virtually any solid surfaces every spring and summer, where they can form extensive, nearly circular colonies of hundreds of individuals (Fig. 1). The ecology of *Membranipora membranacea* in coastal Newfoundland and Labrador has recently caught the attention of Mr. Scott Caines, M.Sc. candidate in Dr. Patrick Gagnon's Cold Ocean Benthic Ecology Laboratory (COBEL, <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~pgagnon/>) at the Ocean Sciences Centre (OSC) of Memorial University of Newfoundland.

We are interested in understanding how populations of this fascinating species develop along the coast and how environmental factors such as water temperature may possibly affect this development. To achieve this goal, we work closely with fish harvesters in nine fishing communities along the west coast of Newfoundland and southern point of Labrador. During the fall of 2008, each fish harvester collected specimens of kelp, those large leafy brown seaweeds that we find in shallow water and provide food and habitat to a number of ecologically and economically important species. These specimens were shipped to us at the OSC for analysis of patterns of recruitment and growth of *M. membranacea*. We will use this data along with records of water temperature at each collection site to try to better understand where, when and how the aliens develop and how they may impact kelp habitats and the associated fisheries. There is still some laboratory work and a lot of data analysis ahead. However, preliminary results indicate that temperature may be an important factor in regulating the recruitment of larvae along Newfoundland's west coast and Labrador's southeast coast. In southwestern Newfoundland larvae first appear in late May, whereas on the Northern Peninsula recruitment does not occur until late August, presumably as a result of colder seawater temperature in the spring. The lowest number of recruiting larvae was observed in the more northerly localities, Red Bay and Green Island Cove, where seasonal temperatures were the lowest, while the strongest recruitment was observed in more southerly locations, Norris Point and Lark Harbour, where seasonal sea temperature was the highest.

Scott Caines (shown in photo below, right), Patrick Gagnon, and their collaborators Dr. Cynthia McKenzie (DFO St. John's) and Dr. Robert Hooper (Bonne Bay Marine Station) are grateful to the following fish harvesters for their valuable collaboration: Charles Riles (Port-aux-Basques), Bernard Barter (Three Rock Cove), Jason Childs (Lark Harbour), Keith Reid (Norris Point), Alvin House (Daniel's Harbour), Malcolm Lavers (Port au Choix), Ivan Maher (Bird Cove), Colby Cullihall and Roland Mclean (Green Island Cove), Doug Ryland (L'Anse au Loup) and Mervin Layden (Red Bay).

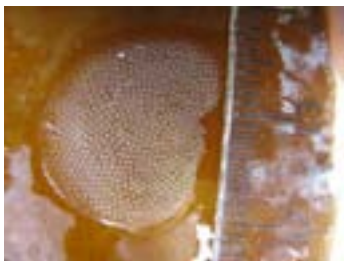


Fig. 1. A colony of *Membranipora membranacea* on the surface of a kelp (*Saccharina longicruris*) specimen (centimetre-scale shown, photo by Scott Caines. .



Sensitive Marine Areas Mapping on the Great Northern Peninsula

Sean St. George is the Executive Director of the RED Ochre Regional Board and a member of the CURRA executive.

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Steering Committee is a multi-stakeholder committee with a focus to create a greater awareness of coastal and marine areas along the western portion of the Great Northern Peninsula (Cape St. Gregory to Cape Bauld). The ICZM Steering Committee has partnered with a number of organizations to enhance awareness of coastal and marine areas and issues, and continues to involve stakeholders in local coastal planning initiatives. In its three-year work-plan (2008-2011), the ICZM Steering Committee has identified sensitive marine areas mapping as a priority for 2008-2009. The committee has partnered with the RED Ochre Regional Board, Nordic Economic Development Corporation and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Oceans Division to identify sensitive marine areas throughout the western portion of the Great Northern Peninsula.

This current exercise involves mapping coastal and marine areas considered important because they support diversity of aquatic species or because they provide spawning and feeding areas for a single species or population (including economically and ecologically important species and species at risk). This exercise focuses on the validity of areas identified through previous work and the identification of new areas through discussions with local stakeholders and experts from various fields of local interests. The results of this exercise will provide municipalities and other organizations with information to make better decisions around coastal planning and resource use, and enhance conflict avoidance and resolution in coastal and marine areas.

This mapping exercise focuses on the validity of sensitive marine areas identified through previous work and the identification of new areas through discussions with local stakeholders and experts from various fields of local interests. A number of areas have been identified along the western portion of the Great Northern Peninsula based on traditional local knowledge and a draft database of supporting information has been compiled. In order to finalize the database and produce maps for these areas, a final review and validation of the information is required. This will involve reviewing the draft database and maps for errors and suggesting revisions to the information based on existing or new knowledge as well as suggesting any new areas.

For the purpose of conducting this exercise, draft maps and databases have been provided for the following areas: Cape St. Gregory to Parson's Pond, Parson's Pond to Ferolle Point, Ferolle Point to Watts Point, Watts Point to Cape Bauld.

Major marine features to be considered include: nursery areas, spawning areas, or feeding areas; high abundance of juveniles; high abundance of targeted species; high concentrations of several or single species at a particular time of year (i.e. other fish, birds or marine mammals); areas where an important commercial species is particularly vulnerable (ex. discreet local populations or relatively rare species); significant natural structures, or manmade structures found on the seabed (artifacts around wreckage etc.); areas of high social, economic and cultural importance.; areas highly impacted by activities such as untreated wastewater disposal and other sources of pollution, storm surges and coastal erosion.

The final product will include a series of maps and a supporting database identifying sensitive marine areas along the western portion of the Great Northern Peninsula based on traditional local knowledge.



Trails, tales and tunes on community radio

VOBB: The “Heart” of Community Radio

Last year, at a planning meeting, the CURRA Community Coordinator Fred Campbell explained to our group how a community radio station would operate. We had decided to operate a 30-watt FM station from the Julia Ann Walsh Heritage Centre during the 10 days of the second annual Trails, Tales and Tunes Festival in Norris Point.

I had volunteered to be the opening radio host on May 17th, largely because of my family’s involvement in radio from its earliest days to the present. I was prepared to tell some local stories or play some recorded interviews if needed, but was hoping for live content and I need not have worried as we had our first drop-in interview at 10 o’clock on that first day--an excellent start. This interview was with Trevor Taylor (our local provincial M.H.A.) and provincial tourism minister Clyde Jackman. They talked about the potential value of community radio and also told a few personal stories to kick things off. Soon after, a group of local kids dropped in and came on air telling a few of their stories. Thus, “Ben and Friends” was born, and this stimulated a lot of interest in the community, especially among the youth.

The Voice of Bonne Bay studio was set up with a living room atmosphere, complete with an antique radio to give a comfortable setting for the telling of local stories. During our 9 days of broadcasting, we had people of all ages telling their own stories, reading stories from their favourite books, doing interviews on topics of local interest, musicians doing live shows, and even a group of “Hookers” at the station who hooked a mat for donation to the festival. All these helped in generating lots of community participation. George Tucker summed it up when he said: “ I only intended to do a couple of hours but it was so much fun I stayed almost all day, until I realized the family was waiting for me to come home for supper”!

One of the most popular shows was the daily after school broadcast by the students of Gros Morne Academy, our local school. I was very impressed by their enthusiasm and how quickly they became “naturals on radio”. Reports from the community were telling us that in many homes the television and the computers were hardly used at all during the festival as people were listening to their friends and family members on VOBB each day. On the other hand, people were also spreading the word about our simulcast on the Internet, and reports were coming in that by this modern medium, we had lots of listeners in Ontario, Alberta and many other locations around the world, including Norway, Korea and Australia for example. Most of these listeners were expatriate Newfoundlanders who really enjoyed this link with a far away home. My grandfather, the radio pioneer would have been amazed!

This experiment in community radio brought the community together and raised the level of community pride to levels I’ve never seen before. Almost a year later, people are still talking about VOBB and asking “can we have a permanent community radio station: that was really great for the town!” People have seen the potential of community radio in the Gros Morne National Park area, considering we have some 160,000 visitors from around the world each year as well as the local audience.

After the end of the last broadcast we went through the station logbook and arrived at a total of over 200 people that had participated in the VOBB broadcasts during the 9 days we were on air. Not bad for a town of only 800! I think we earned the title “the little radio station with the big community Heart”.

[Dave Morrow \(Gros Morne National Park Interpreter\) & radio host for VOBB](#)

BBMS turns Forty!

In the next issue we take a look at the evolution of the Bonne Bay Marine Station from its beginnings as a marine biology observation post to the state-of-the-art student residence and aquarium complex it is today.



The Western Shorefast
Bonne Bay Marine Station
P.O. Box 69
Norris Point, NL, A0K 3V0

Contact us:

[CURRA Community Coordinator \(abest@mun.ca\)](mailto:abest@mun.ca)

[BBMS Station Manager \(fcuthber@mun.ca\)](mailto:fcuthber@mun.ca)



Social Sciences and Humanities
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