

...Twila Grosse Continued

For the first time, voters used e-balloting to vote in a Provincial election. After changes to the Elections Act in 2021, Elections Nova Scotia started development of an electronic voting system that will allow in-person balloting on a tablet. Elections Nova Scotia said this was the first use of e-balloting in Canada.

The byelection was called after Liberal MLA Angela Simmonds stepped down earlier this year. In the last election, Simmonds won with 43.4 per cent over PC Archy Beals, 28.7 per cent, and Colter Simmonds with 27.9 per cent.

Elections Nova Scotia reported the following official results for the Preston election on August 10, 2023:

- Twila Gross, PC, 1950
- Colter Simmonds, NDP, 1,145
- Carlo Simmons, Liberal, 1,021
- Anthony Edmonds, Green, 101
- Bobby Taylor, Nova Scotians United, 95



Announcement that MusGo Rider will get \$130,400 to install solar panels to power electric vehicle chargers for its growing fleet of all-electric vehicles, through the Province’s Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund. (L to R, HRM Councillor David Hendsbee, HRM Councillor Tony Mancini, MLA Kent Smith, MusGo Rider Executive Director, and Environment and Climate Change Minister Timothy Halman.)

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EASTERN SHORE COOPERATOR
OCTOBER DEADLINE – SEPTEMBER 13TH

Enviro Regs Ripping Up Gold Mine “String of Pearls”

By Richard Bell

Atlantic Gold’s plan to build what the company called a “string of pearls” of four open-pit gold mines along the Eastern Shore is in tatters, after provincial and federal regulators finally began poking holes in the company’s “bait-and-switch” plans for disposing of the toxic waste tailings from the three remaining proposed mines.

The company’s incremental approach hinged on exploiting a shortcoming in federal and provincial environmental assessment regulations, essentially a “workaround” to avoid a more fulsome and consultative federal Regional Environmental Assessment as was required in Northern Ontario’s Ring of Fire Area, a vast area of extensive mineral deposits and Indigenous communities. Neither the provincial government nor the federal government have ever looked at the four-mine “string of pearls” proposal as a single, unified project, despite entreaties from environmentalists.

When it came time to get the permit to open the first mine in Moose River, Atlantic Gold played the regulators by applying for a provincial permit for a single mine. The permit application included building a state-of-the-art system of settling ponds to keep toxic

materials like arsenic and cyanide out of the environment. The company managed to get the first mine approved through the lowest level of provincial environmental assessment, with no federal assessment at all.

But Atlantic Gold’s plan was based entirely on treating the four mines as a single project. The company would build a complete ore-processing plant at Touquoy. As the gold at the Touquoy site ran out, the company planned to start trucking crushed ore from the next planned mine in Beaver Dam to be processed at Touquoy, continuing this process over the years to 2030 with the proposed mines at Fifteen Mile Stream and Cochrane Hill.

What was missing from Atlantic Gold’s permit application for Touquoy was what it planned to do with the toxic waste produced at Touquoy from processing the ore from the subsequent three mines.

It turns out that the company had a simple and cheap solution: just dump the tailings into the huge open-pit hole created by digging out the ore at Touquoy. This open-pit hole had none of the careful engineering built into the site’s original tailings pond. And the

hole was created by years of blasting, inevitably leaving cracks in the rock that could allow contaminated water to leak into surrounding groundwater.

But when Atlantic Gold finally proposed this open-pit tailings disposal plan to the province, provincial regulators balked.

Faced with the loss of its cheap open-pit tailings disposal site at Touquoy, the company, now operating as Atlantic Mining Nova Scotia, announced a series of major changes in an August statement:

First, it was withdrawing its request to the province to modify its Touquoy permit to allow it to start dumping tailings into the open pit at Touquoy.

Second, it was withdrawing the Beaver Dam Gold Project application from the cooperative federal-provincial environmental assessment project.

Third, it was withdrawing the Fifteen Mile Stream Gold Project from the cooperative federal-provincial environmental process.

In its statement, the company laid the blame squarely at the feet of provincial regulators: “As no additional tailings capacity has been permitted at the Touquoy Mine.... the Fifteen Mile Stream Gold Project will be redesigned to allow the relocation of the Touquoy Processing Facility including the equipment for the final gold recovery step.” The redesign will also include a previously disclosed plan to have four open-pits on site, rather than the one in the original permit application.

The company’s substantial changes for Fifteen Mile Stream will require it to go through a new environmental permitting process that will likely include both provincial and federal regulators.

Deirdre Green, Program Director for the Nova Scotia Atlantic Salmon Federation, said in a statement to the *Cooperator* that her organization believed that the company was just “rearranging the sequence of their proposed mining activity. They likely still intend to do three more mines and we don’t support ANY of them.” Her organization’s opposition to these mines runs deep: “We will defend wild Atlantic salmon and their natal rivers to our grave.”

Sheet Harbour Wellness Centre Out of Starting Gate

By Richard Bell

The long-planned Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre (ESLC) in Sheet Harbour took a major step forward in August when HRM issued a Request for Proposals for Design Consulting Services. The new building will house a new public library, the wellness centre, a community hall, and a replacement for existing fire station. The building will be located on HRM land next to the fire station, which will be torn down when the new station is completed.

Tom McInnis, the former MLA and Senator who has headed up the ESLC’s effort, told the *Cooperator* in an interview that the community was pleased at the news of the RFP. He noted the importance of patience in dealing with large government-funded projects. “Patience is a virtue for these projects,” McInnis said. “In the private sector, we’d say let’s just get the excavators in, and let’s get it built. HRM has to make sure the land is suitable for the public.”

Community activists started working on the project seven years ago, when HRM was preparing to replace the leaky roof on the Sheet Harbour Lions Community Centre. “The community came up with the concept. They were just going to put a new roof on an old building. We thought, ‘Why couldn’t we consolidate these services and have a wonderful facility?’”

ESLC volunteers did extensive research on potential sites, identifying at least 17 sites. The initial focus was on sites along the West River. “Building by the water there by the falls was attractive to many people,” McInnis said. “But the Department of Environmental had concerns about blasting bedrock near the falls. And we got into archeological problems that were going to take too long to explore.”

So ESLC turned the whole project over to HRM in February 2023. HRM already owned the new site, avoiding the need for any expropriation. HRM will own

and operate the 21,000 square foot building (about 10,000 sq. ft for the fire station, and 11,000 for the community centre). McInnis estimated that the building would be completed in late 2027. All three levels of government are sharing the funding.

The RFP lays out an ambitious plan for the multi-purpose building, starting with its energy profile: “The building should use only electricity as a fuel source and is required to be Net-Zero. Net-Zero means 100% of a building’s energy need is generated on-site or off-site through a renewable source, whichever is most cost effective.” If net-zero should prove infeasible currently, the design should still be “net-zero ready.”

The building will also have to meet the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified Gold standard. This standard provides guidance for companies about the accessibility of their buildings and promotes the adoption of Universal

Design principles. According to the Foundation’s web site, about one in seven Canadians now have some form of disability, including mobility, vision, and/or hearing. That number will increase as the population continues to age.

[Note: you can find the RFP for Design Consulting Services at: <https://halifax.bidsandtenders.ca/Module/Tenders/en/Tender/Detail/44305d75-67a7-49b1-a764-45cda8cf1b46>. Sign up for a free account]



Local Fighter Fights Setbacks

By Thomas Scott

Life for pro boxer Kyle “Real Deal” McNeil has been tough both inside and outside the ring since his last interview with the *Cooperator*. In June, he lost his latest fight, after taking time off to recover from an assault in December that left him with a severe concussion.

McNeil fought fellow Canadian Dylan Rushton on June 10th but lost by a unanimous decision for his fifth professional loss (against 13 wins).

In an interview, McNeil said he knew Rushton would be “as tough as nails.” Although the decision was unanimous, McNeil said a draw was more expected after the fight.

“If he threw one punch and landed one good shot, I’d go and make sure to hit him with four or five [shots],” said McNeil. “I tip my hat to him, and he fought a hard fight. But at the end of the day, no matter how many times life knocks you down, I always get up,” McNeil said.

McNeil suffered a real knockdown last December when two strangers assaulted him with a shovel. He accepted a ride from a bar from two strangers who

had been talking with him about how much their son loved boxing. But instead of taking him home, they took him to their place where one of them hit him in the head with a shovel. He was blinded by blood at one point during the attack and ended up in the hospital.

“It was like a bad horror movie,” said McNeil. “I was very thankful to get out of there.” McNeil spent two days in the hospital before heading home to start training again. During his workouts, McNeil dealt with nausea and concussion symptoms.

“It’s my training that kept me alive for sure. I guess I just didn’t really give myself time after,” said McNeil. “I didn’t want to slow down.”

McNeil will be giving himself some well-deserved rest before returning to the ring. He owns a 100-acre farm in Clam Harbour and has been landscaping it since his last fight. McNeil and his wife give people tours of their farm.

The boxer hopes to fight at a lighter weight in the future. He said he was lightning fast when fighting between 135 and 140 pounds.

“Ultimately, I’m just looking to go back to the drawing board, get with my coach and my team and really trust in the work there and putting in even more work than I’ve ever done before,” McNeil said. “No matter how hard I work in all of my different jobs and careers I’m involved in, I know I can always do more.”

The boxer plans to fight next in the first week of November. “I’d love to put on another event and get back at it promoting and fighting.”



Practice Mending: Good for You - and the Planet

By Mary Elizabeth O’Toole

Examples of mended clothes have been identified from before recorded history. Mending was essential, especially in times and places where textiles were scarce. It was born out of necessity, as people sought to extend the lifespan of their clothing.

However, there are many examples of mending losing popularity as access to textiles became more readily available through trade and mass production. For example, in Japan’s Edo era (c. 1600-1800s), textile restrictions on lower classes severely limited access to textiles. Villagers in the northern most parts of the country sought ways to both preserve their clothes and add extra insulation for warmth against the harsh climate. They developed a style of mending using boro (rags) and adding sashiko (little stabs) stitching for strength and decoration. The practice was continued for centuries but with increased trade and broader textile availability, boro mending became a source of shame. Most existing examples of early boro were found in walls and floors where they were hidden away and used for insulation.

These techniques, developed from a practical need, have over time become recognized as art. In a world often driven

by disposable culture, there has been a growing move to rediscover the beauty and significance of textile mending. The art of repairing and repurposing clothing, once considered an unwanted but needed chore, has been recognized as offering many benefits.

Sustainability

One of the most significant benefits is the positive impact on the environment. In a time of fast fashion and climate crisis, mending represents a valuable tool for sustainable living. Clothing production is a resource-intensive process that contributes to many environmental problems. Mending and repurposing extends the life of garments, leading to less demand for new production and reducing the amount of clothing that ends up in landfills.

Storytelling & History

Mending can be a way to honour memories and stories. Patches are typically made with materials from other projects or previously loved items. Each repair, therefore, is a reminder of associated people, places, or objects. Their stories become a part of the new chapter of the repaired item. In addition, with each stitch, the

mender imbues the object with their love, caring, and personal stories.

The stories told through mending are not limited to the individual item or its maker or wearer. They also provide wider cultural and historical connections. Traditional mending techniques like Japanese sashiko and Indian Kantha (patched cloth) embroidery are passed through generations, preserving cultural heritage and skills that are unique to countries or regions.

Mindfulness

Beyond the physical repair, mending can be a deeply meditative practice that creates a space for reflection as it encourages you to slow down, breathe deeply, and quiet the mind.

Creative Expression

Mending is an opportunity for artistic

expression. Some menders pride themselves on precise stitches and invisible fixes, but many prefer more visible mends. One inspiration for visible mending comes from the Japanese art of Kintsugi (golden joinery), the art of repairing broken pottery with gold lacquer, transforming the damaged piece into a symbol of beauty and resilience. Through visible mending techniques like woven yarn, colourful patchwork, or decorative stitching, torn fabric transforms into works of art. Pops of colour and texture infuse garments with both new life and a unique style. Each repair turns “flaws” into distinctive “features” that contributes to an individual statement piece.

Mending is easy to learn (start with a local class or a search on YouTube), inexpensive, and beneficial to you and the planet. Why not pick up a needle and thread and give it a try? There is nothing to lose – and so much to gain.



Jam Session

Old School, Musquodoboit Harbour

Monday Evenings 6:00-9pm.

Everyone Welcome.

