

Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance (PEIWA) Board Meeting

May 5, 2021, 4-6 PM, Milton Community Hall, 7 New Glasgow Rd., Miltonvale Park

In-Person Attendance (6): Nic Bergeron, Angela Douglas, Mike Durant, Mary Finch, Dale Mclsaac, & Rebecca Ramos

Zoom Attendance (5?): Dale Cameron, Scott Roloson, Karen Rank, Jason Campbell, Andrew Lush, & ?

Minutes:

Note: These minutes will be made available at https://peiwatershedalliance.org/?page_id=26162, along with the Project Manager, Equipment Manager, Watershed Ecologist, and '2 Billion Trees Initiative' updates.

1.) Call to Order - 4:08 PM

2.) Approval of April 7, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

- No additions or changes
- Minutes moved by Dale Mclsaac and seconded by Scott Roloson
- Motion passed at 4:09 PM

3.) Discussion Items:

a.) Supplemental Irrigation Committee Representation & Irrigation Research Committee

- Since the April 7 PEIWA Board Meeting, Mike Durant met with Brian Matheson (Deputy Minister of Agriculture & Land), Brad Colwill (Deputy Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Action), and Robert Godfrey (Executive Director of the Federation of Agriculture) to discuss both Supplemental Irrigation Committee representation and an Irrigation Research Committee pertaining to Dr. Michael van den Heuvel's high-capacity well research

- As per Mike Durant, Steven Myers (Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Action) "wants something put together to provide guidance" and is "not in favour of Robert Godfrey's first proposal"; he's seeking insight on "strategies government should be pursuing for supplemental irrigation" and "wants both supplemental irrigation plans and research"

- "Is the Alliance open to discussion if there's a need for extraction below baseflow? Should the Alliance participate at all? We could always walk away if we're fundamentally at odds." -Mike

"If we're not there, we don't have any input. We pretty much have to be at the table; we need to have our say." - Dale Cameron (Scott, Andrew, and everyone else participating via Zoom agreed with this)

"There's no advantage to sitting out." - Dale Mclsaac

- The Board unanimously agreed to participate

- "Who will participate, and what will/should our representation look like? Could be someone from the Board and/or the watershed community at large." - Mike

- Working Title: 'Steering Committee to Discuss Supplemental Irrigation Strategies'

"Should we combine the two items [i.e., the Supplemental Irrigation Committee and the Irrigation Research Committee] into a single committee?" - Dale Mclsaac

- As per Mike, the Minister and Deputy Ministers stipulated that supplemental irrigation and irrigation research are to be handled separately

"Will the Alliance participate in both, with representation to be determined?" -Mike

- The Board unanimously agreed to participate in both

- Dale Cameron motioned that the Alliance is willing to participate in irrigation research talks as a steering committee member, and is also willing to join the proposed Supplemental Irrigation Committee; this was seconded by Dale Mclsaac

- Motion passed at 4:18 PM

b.) Representation on the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)

- No Board members have the capacity to do this; as such, a volunteer from the watershed community (representing the Alliance) is desired

- "Should someone from the watershed community be asked to represent the Alliance? Are we okay with providing guidelines? How tightly coupled should this person be? A director, a coordinator?" - Mike

"Should we hold nominations? We could ask those interested to write a paragraph justifying their candidacy." - Angela

"We [i.e, the Board] could confidentially vote to elect the person." - Scott

"Is this person expected to attend Alliance board meetings? If so, they should be made aware of this in advance." - Mary

"EAC updates at Alliance board meetings would be expected." - Mike

- At 4:25 PM, the Board unanimously decided to put out a call to the watershed community for EAC representation, including the EAC's current schedule, Alliance expectations, etc. in the call

- "The watershed community should have two weeks to think about this." -Mike

- Mary will send the call out within a week / before the next PEIWA board meeting, with applications to be reviewed ASAP after this

4.) Financial Report (Impromptu Agenda Change due to Karen Rank's Early Departure)

- In-depth financial information is available on the Google Drive
- RBC Express ongoing, successful gains expected (RBC Express is a “premium online banking tool which offers online service that gives you control over your cash, insight into your banking information and the security you need to protect your business”)
- “When invoices and receipts come in, they’re sent to the signers for review before being sent to Barb, who then prepares the payments for the online system” - Mary
- The Watershed Management Fund (WMF) Financial Report included a good breakdown of categories in which money was spent, e.g., for \$7000 of insurance, \$4500 in WMF funding was used, the difference having been made up by other funders
- \$25,000 in WMF money was spent, with a lot have been covered by other programs
- \$60,000 in WMF money was carried over from last year (i.e., extra allocation)
- No WMF funds have been received for this fiscal year as of yet
- “Is Barb allowed to do a few more things [i.e., expanded powers]?” - Karen
- To be discussed; Barb may be available to meet next Wednesday
- “So equity of \$112,000 is what’s left over for us? -Mike
- “Yes, you’re probably right.” - Mary
- There may be holdbacks from other projects, e.g., much from the Agri-Watershed Partnership
- \$800,000 in the Alliance account currently
- “I’m hoping we can talk more with government; I have to assume more funds will come into the Alliance this year (e.g., for the proposed 50-metre buffer zone initiative)” - Mike
- Surplus WMF funds have been held in the past

3.) c.) 2 Billion Trees Program

- See full update below (p. 9)
- An R5 is in the works right now
- 160-hectares to be planted annually, both a-forestation (“areas with no trees get trees”) and reforestation (habitat enhancement), including riparian zones; trees to be provided by the provincial nursery - more capacity is being explored (an extra greenhouse, increased species, etc.)
- This is a 10-year program
- Hoping to start this fall and ramp up from there
- The provincial government wants the Alliance to do the program coordination; we would identify lands that need planting, undertake planting, monitoring, maintenance, and work with the nursery, Macphail Woods, Forestry and forestry contractors
- Many areas will be small

- Could use a full-time Alliance coordinator position and part-time staff
- Limitations in the past included tree availability, development, etc.
- There is a possibility of working with a broad range of stakeholders
- There is a possibility of working with Indigenous partners as well
- “Is MacPhail getting money?” - Angela
- “That could be coordinated.” - Mary
- “MacPhail Woods could do a lot with a couple hundred thousand dollars.” - Angela

- “We’ve talked about Gary Schneider and would love to have him engaged. We’d have to discuss this; let’s gently encourage collaboration and the sharing of best practices.” - Mike

- “Look at the AWP as an example of what can happen when the government puts money down. At a cost of \$31,000 over two years, we established a website, a booklet, undertook outreach, got projects funded, etc. Government can’t do that, and we can leverage this.” - Mike

- “Other planting programs are underway; they do want to make sure this works within existing frameworks, i.e., no backdoors bypassing existing programs” – Mary

- “The Minister has been briefed me on this. RFIs are required by the end of May, with a certain amount allotted to each province.” – Mary (she’ll be addressing this this week)

- “We’ll require a full-time coordinator, with \$50-60 thousand for other expenses.” - Mike

- “We should have a discussion with Kate or the Deputy Minister. This is a long-term initiative we’d like to support, but how should we do this?” - Mike

- “They (the province) want the Alliance to step up.” -Mary

- Mary to pull together a costing for the RFI

- “What if we sat down with Gary to discuss this generally (i.e., the future of forests in PEI)?” - Angela

- “Yes, as in: ‘We need you to provide guidance on what needs to be planted where and when over the next 10 years, plus other hopes for reforestation.’” -Mike

- “Groups have a hard time finding spots to plant.” - Mary

- “I urge us NOT to see how cheap we can do it; we should get a well-paid position” – Dale Cameron

- “Yes, be aggressive for what’s reasonable, e.g., we need an office, fair compensation, administrative cost coverage, etc.” -Mike

- “This is being tied into this whole idea of provincial-buyback. The Minister admits he doesn’t know how this will work yet, and farmers have made it clear they don’t have land to give up. Analysis and work needs to be done. We are experts and we have access to competent people, both our staff and otherwise. Considering this is a 10-year project, let’s strike while the iron’s hot.” -Mike

- “We should suggest to the Minister that tightening the costs for clearcutting land might be a good idea.”

- Andrew Lush

"I can start getting numbers down and share them, have a conversation with Gary, etc." - Mary

5.) Project Manager Update

- See full update below (p. 10)

- "Will the Alliance commit \$1,400 for two more weeks of [data rescuer] Charlotte Large's time (8 weeks, \$800/week = \$6400, province pays \$5000)?" -Angela

- "Yes," unanimously

- Round 1 HSP final report in

- \$77,000 dollars approved for Round 2

- SkillsPEI position to make up the difference (chainsaw operator)

- Climate Action & Awareness Fund application submitted, talks ongoing

- Living Shorelines sites to be chosen on Thursday (Green Shores training to come)

- Atlantic DataStream webinar upcoming, Rebecca to work with groups again this year

- Data Rescue: as mentioned above, Charlotte Large is back on through FF&W

- "Make sure that Rebecca's salary is covered as well; we currently have 6 months for her through HSP and Climate Action & Awareness Fund funding" - Mike

- Looking at adding more weeks; everyone agrees, approved by the Board

- AEI final report submitted to ECCC, meetings ongoing

- Sectoral Initiatives Program funding application submitted, no response yet

- Equipment bank delivery imminent, e.g., YSI solutions; there is shed space at the nursery

- \$12,700 office space available at the new MCPEI building on Water Street (1 parking spot)

- "We need a dedicated space." - Angela

- Rapid Geomorphic Testing training to come via Ron Jenkins (Atlantic Bubble pending; may not be until the fall)

- "Is there anything in the CRF report we're at risk for?" - Mike

- "No." - Angela

- Angela was in the field today using the Alliance's WGIS app for culvert assessments

- Angela: "Classroom training is required for this before June and/or July; could be individualized and hands on."

- "We could do site-specific training sessions per group, or multiple groups combined." - Mike

6.) Equipment Manager Update

- See full update below (p. 12)

- Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) bat calls still being ID'd; another employee will be hired to assist

- Groups to be asked to process bat data due to volume (some money will be available for this)

- "Would be beneficial for groups to be cognizant of the process." -Rebecca

- Calls are identified by waveform

- Auto-ID is only partially functional

- Tessa met with Rebecca to discuss data analysis strategies
- “Stay connected with Tessa; it’s great to get this experience.” -Mike
- Grids and a monitoring schedule for stationary monitoring sites will be sent to groups shortly
- First year annual bat report submitted to the province
- PEI Bat Committee to discuss colony counts
- “PEI has the most comprehensive bat monitoring in the country” – Mary

- 39 more templates for FF&W data provided by Atlantic DataStream
- Hunter-Clyde water data being handled by Rebecca
- Gear is currently being cleaned, calibrated, etc.
- Equipment deliveries are in the works

- 10 groups now have their own YSI units, and training is in the works via Rebecca; a walkthrough video will be shot and distributed to groups

- Hunter-Clyde water data being handled by Rebecca

7.) Summary of Watershed Ecologist Activities

- See full update below (p. 13)

- Forested Landscape Project – Matt Guindon and Simon Wilmot’s jobs are completed and reports have been drafted
- The Alliance has parented with the Invasive Species Council to facilitate coordinator and other staff positions; demonstration projects to come; payroll to run through the Alliance
- Received funding in partnership with the Federation of PEI Municipalities for a Conservation Specialist to be hired for municipal consulting; position to be advertised in the next month or so
- Final HSP bat report submitted; went over cash flow, more money went to Rebecca’s salary (e.g., no travel required); mileage for travel covered
- The Alliance’s WMF report is complete and available in the Google Drive
- WMF field assessments are starting soon, Mary to helm this (11+ groups)
- First chainsaw training course undertaken (4 different groups)
- A blanket permit draft has been submitted to Shawn Hill and Roseanne MacFarlane for review, and another draft will be sent out to groups (aiming to finalize this for June 1)
- ClimateSense intern position posted

“Was the HSP PSS position signed off on by Mike?” -Dale McIsaac

“Yes.” -Mary/Mike

“This is \$3000.” -Mary

“This should have been discussed; a report should be submitted to the Board for approval of financial decisions.” - Dale McIsaac

“Agreed, so we have that record.” - Mike

“The Board would have to be comfortable with that.” - Dale McIsaac

“Going forward, we’ll look at having the Executive Director approve submissions for project funds and costing and figure out what our ongoing process is. This could be part of future Financial Updates, motions to be raised during minute reviews, etc.” -Mike

8.) Agri-Watershed Partnership (AWP) Update (Mike Durant)

- The AWP Committee hasn’t met since the Alliance’s April 7 Board Meeting, though they’ll likely be meeting next week (i.e., May 10-14)
- “The recent focus has been getting the applications weeded-down – five are being pursued, and Gwen Vesey is working with Soil & Water Engineers to put together project plans with landowners” -Mike
- The ‘Soil Conservation for Potato Production’ document (60+ pages, circa 1997) was updated to encompass the latest Beneficial Management Practices and reflect today’s standards; this document has been printed and distributed to farmers via the Federation of Agriculture, and copies are to be given to both the Minister of Agriculture & Land (Bloyce Thompson) and the Minister of Environment, Water, & Climate Change (Steven Myers)
- “A final report has been drafted, the [AWP] program having been delayed in years prior; e.g., how much money was provided to do actual work for farmers? Are there any alternative measures to be proposed to the provincial government? The report will be finalized by our next meeting.” -Mike
- “\$695,700 dollars of \$700,000 was spent over two years – the difference [i.e., \$43,000] having been spent to make everything happen to date. We’ll have enough funds for the next 4-5 years, conceivably, for coordinators, outreach events, etc.. We can reevaluate for the long-term after this.” -Mike
- “Gwen is staying on in her role as coordinator; she’s highly respected in both the governmental and agricultural sectors” -Mike
- More information / outreach is to be provided to groups soon

9.) Forward Agenda

- Andrew Lush requested that the Wildlife Conservation Fund (WCF) report forms be ameliorated (e.g., Excel spreadsheets), having stated that “using tables in Microsoft Word is problematic”.
- Angela will raise this with the WCF Board

10.) Other

Status of the Richmond Bay Watershed Association (RBWA):

- “Any response from Richmond Bay pertaining to their withdrawal from the Alliance?” - Dale Cameron
- Mike had followed up with Cathy Gallant about RBWA rescinding their request (no response); at one point, she had expressed an openness to meeting with Leonard and Mike exclusively
- “Richmond Bay expressed a desire to pull out, and Kate [MacQuarrie] stated that they would lose their WMF funding if they did, as Alliance membership is required. The Deputy Minister [i.e., Brad Colwill] was fully supportive of this.” - Mike

- “Leonard [Lang] is the president of the watershed group [RBWA], and he did a 180; they didn’t realize they’d lose their funding. Cathy was upset with a number of things, and Leonard felt she reacted harshly.” -Mike

- Though it was initially decided that a formal Letter of Rescindment was not required (Kate, Brad, and the Board were informed verbally), it was eventually decided that a formal letter should indeed be provided, and this was requested of the RBWA

- Leonard’s last word to Kate and Stephen Myers was as follows: “As of February 18, 2021*, the Richmond Bay Watershed Association is a non-member of the PEI Watershed Alliance” (he included this note with the signed signature page of their WMF contract agreement)

* This being the date of the RBWA’s original Alliance withdrawal request

- “We need our day in court; this is not acceptable – it undercuts what the Alliance and the government is trying to do here.” - Mike (Mike spoke with Brad Colwill on this, and he agreed, also assuming that Minister Myers will hold the line)

“Cathy rules the roost there and does the work, which I say with the utmost respect for her watershed coordinator work.” -Mike

- At the time of this meeting, Leonard Lang hadn’t responded to a call from Mike for 36 hours ...

- Kate MacQuarrie is holding the RBWA’s WMF payment until this is resolved (unless Minister Myers says otherwise)

- “I hope the Minister is willing to listen and understand. I think he will; there’s no benefit in government picking winners and losers between watershed groups and the Alliance; there’s no benefit for the Minister to step in here.” - Mike

- “Diplomatic discussions with Cathy would be great.” -Mike

- Mike to call Deputy Minister Brad Colwill about this if Leonard Lang doesn’t respond ASAP

Irrigation Meeting with the Coalition for the Protection of PEI Water:

- “The Coalition for the Protection of PEI Water is seeking a meeting with the Alliance to discuss irrigation – not desperately, but as soon as possible. What common ground do we share, and what information can be shared? This could be an informal Zoom meeting.” – Andrew Lush

“A Zoom meeting would be a great way to do it. Set up a meeting; today’s meeting minutes could be distributed.” -Mike

“I don’t have an issue with a brainstorming session.” - Scott

- Andrew to set up a Doodle poll to arrange for a meeting time.

Meeting adjourned by Dale Mclsaac at 5:53 PM.

2 Billion Trees Initiative (A Proposed Approach for PEI) [Mary Finch]:

Background:

In December 2020, Government of Canada announced a program to deliver on its commitment of planting two billion trees over 10 years. Funding will be available to provinces and territories – as well as municipalities, non-profit and for-profit organizations and indigenous organizations – to support related costs for the entire supply chain from seed collection, through production, to planting and monitoring. Trees planted under this program must be incremental to existing planting (ie not planting that is legally mandated). Government of Canada will support up to 50% of costs, and the deadline for their Request for Information (RFI) is May 27, 2021. The purpose of the RFI is for jurisdictions to consider how they wish to participate, and enable them time to consult with potential project partners and to develop a multi-year implementation plan.

More information can be found: <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees.html>

The priority of this program is for new forests (afforestation); however, reforestation and rehabilitation work can also be funded.

In April 2021, I was approached by Kate MacQuarrie to discuss potential partnership between the PEI Watershed Alliance and Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division.

Proposed Approach:

Development of a new planting program with a goal of planting 160 hectares annually. This is outside current programs including: Carbon Capture Tree Planting Program, Forest Enhancement Program and Greening Spaces. Potential areas to be planted include 50 m riparian buffer buy-back land as well as areas identified by watershed groups¹, landowners, industry and other partners.

Trees would be produced by J. Frank Gaudet Nursery and provided to the program at no cost. Production of the nursery would be ramped up for program needs (approximately 300,000 trees annually). It is anticipated that this will be a 10 year program which will start in later this year. Construction of new greenhouses at Upton is being suggested as is increased species diversification.

Specifications around program delivery including property eligibility, contractor fees, etc are still under discussion and will be determined by Forests, Fish and Wildlife to ensure they are consistent with existing planting programs.

It is proposed that the PEI Watershed Alliance be contracted to handle the coordination, planting and monitoring of the program including:

- Hire staff to assist watershed groups and other partners with planning of plantings (selection of species). Reach out to other partners such as MacPhail Woods to assist with this component.
 - o Full Time coordinator position
 - o Potential for part-time staff to assist components
- Market program to potential landowners and help determine lands for planting

¹ Approximately 150-170 acres of lands for planting were identified when I surveyed watershed groups last month.

- Liaise with nursery regarding available species, areas to be planted and allocate resources accordingly
- Coordinate with forestry contractors, Indigenous agencies and watershed groups to prepare/treat lands, execute plantings, maintenance of plantings and monitor success (determine follow-up actions as necessary)

Benefits for Watershed Groups:

- Increased resources and expertise for watershed groups related to plantings
- Potential for watershed group staff to be hired as sub-contractors to complete work
- Potential for increased input into species availability with nursery
- Increased partnership and cooperation between stakeholders (e.g., Forestry, forest industry, landowners, Indigenous agencies) and watershed groups
- Increased ability to take local conservation priorities into consideration when planning plantings
- Long-term program

Next Steps: If the Board is agreeable – I will prepare a draft budget for Alliance’s contract and continue to work with FFW as a partner in the development of the RFI.

Project Manager Update (Angela Douglas):

Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) for Aquatic Species at Risk: “Atlantic Salmon Habitat Restoration in Prince Edward Island.” Rosie, Mary and I met with Miminegash and finished the final work plan. Completed the final reports (see folder) and submitted to DFO.

HSP Round 2: Successful with this application for \$77,000. Met with all groups to discuss how the funds will be spent and what deliverables were achievable with the reduced amount (applied for \$99,000). Finalized the budget and work plan and sent to DFO who are currently working on the contribution agreement. Applied for a SkillsPEI position to make up for this difference in funding so we could hire someone to work in the field with groups as required.

Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Climate Action and Awareness Fund Application: “Community-Based Climate Action on Prince Edward Island.” I’ve met with project partners and contractors several times. Living shoreline assessments have been complete and I’m meeting with TransCoastal folks on Thursday to choose sites. A call has gone out for the arts component. Finalized budget and project details were sent to ECCC back in early April. Still waiting on ECCC on the contribution agreement. Funds from this will be used towards Rebecca’s salary.

Agri-Watershed Partnership: A revised BMP document - *Soil Conservation for Potato Production: Second Edition* - has been completed and is being mailed out. A draft annual report has been completed and we will be meeting next week to discuss it.

PEI Climate Challenge Fund, Round 2: Simon, Mary and I did a new application for the second round of the fun, as the application form was completely changed from last December. Deliverables were adjusted based on feedback.

Atlantic DataStream: The ADS folks will host a webinar on how to use the data analysis part of the platform in the coming months. Final invoice (\$5000) has been paid for Rebecca’s wages.

Data Rescue Project (with FFW): FF&W committed another \$5000 for Charlotte to continue her work and she was given a new contract (in board meeting folder) with a list of deliverables to accomplish from April 19 - May 8. Will the Alliance commit \$1,400 to two more weeks of her time? (8 weeks, \$800/week = \$6400, province pays \$5000).

Atlantic Ecosystems Initiative: Final report submitted by April 30 deadline, and we are waiting on the 10% holdback (\$6,930.00). Doodle poll sent out for a meeting with groups to discuss water sampling/runoff for 2021.

Sectoral Initiative Funding: With feedback from watershed groups, we developed a funding application for the soft skills needed by watershed staff. We met with Holland College and they have given us a breakdown (including cost) of the 10+ programs that would be applicable/that we requested. We also reached out to Macphail Woods to provide watershed-specific chainsaw training, Sarah Wheatley to provide charitable status application training, and Barb Pinto to provide bookkeeper training. Mary contacted a HR professional that will provide HR support for watershed groups including board member training throughout the duration of the program. INT has confirmed that they will be a project partner as did the VRC. The application was submitted on Mar. 3 for \$298,120 over 3 years. No response yet.

Coastal Restoration Fund Project Updates:

Oyster Reef Project (with DFO/MCPEI) - Have had two meetings in the past month. I will be taking the lead on deploying tide/wave loggers for SMU/Dalhousie as they are unable to come to PEI. Surveys of the sites will be the priority at the end of this month to ensure sites do not contain eelgrass. Construction is slated for mid-June. Randy is setting up another meeting with the band council on Lennox Island for some time in the next few weeks.

WRTBWA - Meeting to do site visits with Sarah and Paul Strain today. Waiting on surveys from his crew and we will choose what other sites (besides the large embedded culvert) that will be done this year.

KNWA - Submitted a detailed permit application for the larger-scale salt marsh creation project and spoke with a local dredging company. I will be meeting with them on site in the coming weeks. Coir logs have been delivered for this coming field season.

SABWF - I've requested the permit for the salt marsh work in 2021. Will be meeting to assess how the site fared over the winter and what needs to be completed this year.

HCWG - Hilary has her antennas up and running and via electrofishing and the use of a fyke net, sufficient numbers of smelt were PIT tagged and successfully navigated through the new nature-like fishway!

TUPCC - Permit submitted for the second bridge structure. Materials have been sourced and purchased though funds from last fiscal.

Equipment Bank: I have purchased equipment and YSI calibration solutions/N probes based upon group feedback (spotter scope, HESS sampler, dissecting scope, etc). A master list of all available equipment will be sent to groups in the next update email. FYI - the storage locker is full! I have some equipment at my house, Rebecca has some at her place.

Storage/Office Space: Mary Myers is going to get back to me regarding space in one of the sheds at the tree nursery but that is not ideal. Randy Angus suggested I reach out to their staff member re office space at the new MCPEI building on Water street. Email from their leasing manager:

“Thanks for visiting. As I mentioned, the space is 350 square feet and includes parking. Annual rent is expected to be \$27/square foot. There would be additional common area rent. That would be based on 6% of the ground floor and estimated to be \$3,000. This would be based on actual costs for things like snow removal, cleaning, property taxes etc., $\$27 * 350 = \$9744 + \$3000 = \mathbf{\$12,744 \text{ annually.}}$ ”

“As I mentioned, my Board want to approve the plan for tenancy on the first floor. If your Board supports your renting the space, I would bring it to my Board in the next week or so for their feedback.”

- Matt McGuire

The space is quite large. We can look for other spaces that may be cheaper but an area for all the equipment is becoming necessary, especially with Rebecca assisting groups with YSI calibrations.

Training: In partnership with UPEI ClimateSense Program, CRF paid for Green shores training for 28 watershed groups representatives and the new ECCC climate fund will be paying for level 2 training including the field component associated with the living shoreline sites. Ron Jenkins will be doing rapid geomorphic assessment training and we will plan that once travelling from out of province is permitted.

Submitted the annual report and supporting documents to DFO (see Google Drive folder).

Meetings:

- Had HSP Salmon Work Plan meeting with Danny in Miminegash.
- Hosted a Zoom meeting for the new HSP funding.
- Been having weekly updates with Charlotte Large (the data technician).
- Met with Mary and Simon to discuss the new application for the Climate Challenge Fund, and other opportunities re projects to address forest issues on PEI.
- Attended Simon’s presentation on the Forested Landscape project via Zoom this week.
- Attended a PEI Salmon Advocacy Council discussion meeting via Zoom, put on by Kris Hunter with the ASF.
- I will be attending the ACCESS meeting next week where CRF groups will be meeting to share projects and ideas.
- Feedback Letter on Water Withdrawal Regulations drafted and submitted.

Equipment Manager Update (Rebecca Ramos):

Habitat Stewardship Program – Bats:

- Manually confirming auto ID files from 2020 monitoring
- Met with PEI’s bat committee to discuss external colony count initiatives
- Met with Tessa and Mary earlier today to discuss data analysis fine tuning, considerations, techniques going forward
- Creating a monitoring schedule for stationary monitoring sites, plan to send to groups involved in the next week so they can prepare for NA Bat monitoring

- 1 GRT was added to the monitoring list, for a total of 12 GRTs
- Mary and I completed a 1st year annual bat report that was sent to the province

DataStream Data Upload: Charlotte forwarded 39 more templates for FFW's historical water data sites to upload to the Alliance's DataStream account.

Equipment Bank:

- Housekeeping (cleaning, organizing, troubleshooting)
- Received a third YSI from AWN for summer monitoring
- Waiting for Hoskin order to come in (YSI equ - solutions, probes)
- 10 groups now have their own YSI
 - Troubleshoot Casc. watershed's new YSI during a calibration training session with Nora and western groups
 - Scheduled to train and/or review calibration protocols with at least 3 other groups, expecting more
 - Plan to upload a video walkthrough of calibration to the PEIWA Google Drive once solutions are in
- Starting to make equipment deliveries for 2021 field season
- Downloaded/processed HCWG's depth logger files

Summary of Watershed Ecologist Activities (Mary Finch):

Projects Underway:

1.) Forested Landscape Priority Places:

a.) Forest Specialists' Update:

- Drafts of both 1) the Riparian Forest Ecological Value and Assessment Methodologies and the 2) Land Protection Tools and Municipal Conservation Initiatives have been completed and will be available (pending review by Forested Landscape Review Core Team).

- Simon provided a summary of the project at a webinar on May 3rd.

b.) Successful in receiving funding (until March 31, 2022) for Invasives Species Coordinator and Technician position in partnership with PEI Invasives Species Council. These are currently posted with closing date of May 10. Positions will help with training for watershed groups. PEI ISC will be the main supervisor of staff, however, these will be through the Alliance's payroll.

c.) Successful in receiving funding (until March 31, 2022) in partnership with Federation of PEI Municipalities to engage municipalities in building awareness of ecological important areas and the land-use planning tools that could be used to protect them. This position will work closely with watershed groups.

2.) Habitat Stewardship Program – Bats

- Submitted a Skills Post-Secondary application for a position to help Rebecca with data analyses and setting up monitoring locations for this spring/summer
- Year-end reporting submitted on April 30th
- Cashflow form for 2021-2022 submitted on May 3rd (money reallocated from BC travel expenses to Rebecca's salary and mileage for Skills position)
- Met with Bat Advisory Committee to discuss monitoring priorities for this year including groups assisting with maternal colony counts, additions to GRTS stationary monitoring

3.) Living Labs

- Decisions on the 2 locations for Vegetated Drainage Ditches will be made by 3rd week of May. Meeting with Audrey, Kensington and Souris to determine locations and feasibility.
- Initiating wetland monitoring protocols including amphibian monitoring within the next couple of weeks to assess biodiversity increases.

4.) WMF/Communications with FFW

- Alliance's WMF 2020 report as well as the year-end reporting for other Alliance projects can be found in the drive online.
- I am responsible for WMF field assessments of 11 groups by June 30th. (Introduction email regarding these assessments will be sent this week).
- Province's watershed coordinator position (previously held by Ross Bernard) is open to external candidates.
- Communicating with Forestry Staff and watershed groups to organize chainsaw training
- First chainsaw course of the year was held this week with 6 participants from 4 watershed groups.
- Discussion with FFW regarding 2 Billion Trees program- proposal for partnership included in meeting notes
- Watershed groups asked for feedback regarding blanket stipulations. Draft of stipulations for watershed blanket permits sent to Shawn Hill and Rosie for review. Meeting with Shawn Hill next week to confirm so permits can be sent to groups prior to June 1st.

5.) Other

- Alliance's ClimateSense intern is posted with applications closing on May 12. Candidate is set to start June 21st.
- Communicated with PEI Aquaculture Alliance about a media post regarding BMPs related to beach clean-ups