



Directors' Report for the Year Ending December 31, 2014
Annual General Meeting
March 28, 2015

This March meeting marks my first full year as Chairman of the Friends of Redtail Society. It still feels a bit overwhelming for me to say that I'm in that position as it's only my second full year as a Board member. When I accepted the position, I explained some of my shortcomings so that no one would be too surprised when they became all too apparent! Michelle responded that we are a team here and would all contribute to the problems we would face. That has proven to be true and a great comfort as we deal with the many issues before the Society. The capability and dedication of your board is note worthy and a great inspiration to me.

The realization that I would be required to give a report today only dawned on me at our last Board meeting as we were discussing today's agenda. One of my shortcomings rearing its' ugly head! As I went over all our past year's meeting minutes, I realized that I had forgotten the number of items we've dealt with, as for me there has been one overriding issue that has taken up most of my thoughts during this time. That is our attempt to acquire the Crown land adjacent to our FRS lands on the Porter Road for us to be part of the Provinces' Community Forest Project program. It has proven to be a long and frustrating journey dealing with the NSDNR, PHP and our own ideas of what's right and wrong with our Government.

Some of the other items we've dealt with are:

- Having Pictou West MLA Karla Mac Farlane attend a board meeting to bring her up-to-date on our Crown Land proposal. She has been very helpful and supportive, offering to pose some questions to the Minister in Question Period, asking him personally in a letter to meet with us and informing us on some of the workings of Government.
- Responding to various requests from various groups such as;
- Dalhousie Mountain Snowmobile Club
- Maritime Land Trust
- Pictou County Recreation
- A submission to the Wheeler Commission Fracking Review
- Pictou Schools' field day
- Various "Talking Forest" Campaign events took place including;
 - Tracking outing on the snow
 - A Night Walk
 - Permaculture
 - Silent Walk to address Grief

Board members met with Xander Martin and his family to accept a donation from his efforts (with family help) from a couple of money raising bottle drives. Both Xander and his sister

Cameron have received honorary FRS memberships until they are 13 years old, at which time they can become full voting members.

And a couple of FRS Land work-days cancelled due to weather in the late Fall.

The Craig's Way trail had a new sign at the Porter Road and stone placed in memory of Craig's Dad, Glenn. This trail is quite popular and is an integral part of FRS lands and their use.

Although this report is for 2014, there have been some developments around the "Crown Land Affair" that have taken place in the last 3 months that deserve inclusion.

The Minister of Natural Resources, Zach Churchill encouraged FRS to meet with PHP and see if we could reach an agreement to "work with" them in the "management" of these lands. To that end Billy MacDonald and I met with Derek Geldart and Reg Delory to discuss their work plans for this block. Derek subsequently sent us a map and description of their plans. To me, these plans seemed reasonable from a forestry perspective, but other board members were adamant that they were not in FRS best interests and the Board rejected a "mutual working relationship" with them. In another development, the DOE announced the Mackay Brook Nature Reserve, a 50 acre piece of this Crown Land block set aside for conservation. Very much in line with FRS concerns. The Crown then proceeded to re-survey and heavily mark the boundary line that we share with them, right in to this Reserve. We plan to improve this line and incorporate it into part of the FRS trail system.

In January of this year, we issued a press release, renewing our call for FRS to be given the opportunity to develop a community forest project on this land. We also sent a letter to PHP and the Minister to the same. MLA Karla MacFarlane offered to ask the Minister personally to meet with us on the land and discuss our proposal. Since the beginning, FRS has been committed to a "Community Forest" concept for this block, along the lines of "The Path We Share" A Natural Resources Strategy for NS. Except, we were interested in all parties of the community, the flora, fauna, soil and water were all partners in our view. Quite a departure from the obvious DNR idea of their human- centered nature of Industrial Forestry support.

Not surprisingly, we've been turned down flat in all our attempts. The last letter from the Minister states that no new community forest proposals are being considered at this time. We're going to put our desire for a partnership with the Crown on "the back burner" for now. We see our proposal, entitled the MacKay Brook Community Forest Project as a valuable document to be used in our work on FRS lands. We're not "going away" as no doubt the Crown would prefer, but see ourselves as a "watchdog" of this Crown block. We are one of their closest neighbours and very concerned with the doings there. Not wanting to be too much of a "thorn", it may turn out to be so. We'll see.

The "big news" though is that 2015 is going to see a real ramping up of the effort on FRS lands. When the snow disappears, we'll be looking to inventory all that exists on our land. We're looking to create a structure of some sort, fire pit and restrooms, a place to gather and plan our outings. We'll create a Stewardship plan for the forest to begin our restoration work, which will include silviculture and harvest sites, more trails, and a road, if necessary. Opportunities will be sought to include work and employment for the human element of our community. As mentioned though, the flora, fauna, soil and water are all part of our community and will

receive the utmost respect. I'm excited about this and hope you are as well. We'll be looking for lots of help.

Thank you.

Tom Miller, Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors