

Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence
Coalition on Sustainability



La coalition pour la viabilité du
sud du Golfe du Saint-Laurent

Reports of the committees and sub-committees of the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability

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1. SGSLCS Co-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT

This report covers the activities of the SGSLCS's steering committee between November 1999 and March 2001. The steering committee consisted of: Monique Aucoin, Omer Brun, Andrew Cameron, Caroline Cameron, Mireille Chiasson (November 1999), Bob Christie, Joel Corcoran, Paul Deveau, Carole Godin (replacing temporarily John Legaut), Éric Giguère, Artie Graham, Larry Hildebrand, Kim Hughes, Barry Jones (December 1999-November 2000), Diane Lapointe (November 1999-January 2001), John Legault,, Dan MacInnes, Judy MacDonald (November 1999-December 2000) Crystal Mc Donald, Mark McLeod, Gustave Mazerolle, Irené Novaczek, Brenda Penak, Nathalie Price, Kerry Prosper, Bruce Raymond, Vincent Robichaud, Jean-Paul Vanderlinden, Bruce Waffer, Deborah Walsh. The following seats were not filled: Québec provincial government, First Nation N.B., First Nation PQ, First Nation PEI, Industry PQ, 1 Industry NB, Municipal PQ., Academia PQ.

Since the Coalition's founding meeting in November 1999, the steering committee met eight times and addressed a range of issues linked both with the building of the Coalition's capacity to achieve its mandate and with issues identified by the membership as priority issues. The steering committee activities consisted of the following elements.

Development of the Coalition work plan

The focus of the work plan for the past year was on capacity building. This included the setting up of working groups, the hiring of a coordinator, the development of communication tools, initiation of a quarterly e-newsletter, revision of the Coalition's constitution, and support to our membership.

Setting up of sub-committee and thematic working groups

During its first meeting the steering committee elected the management committee, and began creation of the following sub-committees: constitution and policy, communication, working group process, oil and gas. A working group on finance was created later. A working group on science and research is in the process of being created. These working groups reported to the steering committee quarterly. Each working group was asked to produce a final report to the membership as well.

Hiring of coordinator and setting up of an office

Due to the historical linkages between BBEMA and the Coalition it was decided that BBEMA would serve as the Coalition's fiscal agent for the first year. The coordinator's position was advertised broadly and Marie-Josée Maillet was hired starting August 2000. Between November 1999 and July 2000 Irené Novaczek served as an interim coordinator. The Coalition's office was provided by NB Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Aquaculture in their regional office in Bouctouche.

Advice to the constitution and policy subcommittee

The steering committee gave direction to the constitution and policy working group regarding the following issues: composition of the management committee, procedure for electing steering committee members, revision of the different elements presented to the membership at the founding meeting. For two of the eight meetings quorum was not met.

The steering committee will propose to the membership a well-defined set of rules for steering committee members as well as a reduction of the quorum.

Support to members

Several members requested letters of support for specific projects. A procedure was adopted for treating these demands. Natural Resources Canada asked that the Coalition contribute to the identification of candidates for the Sustainable Community Initiatives (SCI) program that provides computer, mapping software and technical support to community groups. The Coalition sent a RFP to its membership and forwarded the expression of interest to Natural Resources Canada. Art Hanson, ocean ambassador, met with the Coalition's steering committee in order to consult the Coalition on the role and composition of the minister's advisory council on the oceans.

Incorporation and charitable status

The steering committee decided to move forward with a recommendation to the membership to the effect that the Coalition begins the federal incorporation process as well as the process to obtain charitable status.

Clarifying the Coalition's role

A challenge that the steering committee faced was the difficulty of developing a common understanding of what the Coalition role should be. A meeting was dedicated to this issue and the Coalition mandate as it appears in the founding meeting document was reconfirmed.

Preparation of the first annual general meeting

In order to prepare the first AGM a specific committee was created to take care of the organization of the first AGM.



2. SGSLCS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Management Committee was chosen by the Steering Committee during its first meeting. The Management Committee consisted of: Jean-Paul Vanderlinden, co-chair, Larry Hildebrand, co-chair, Omer Brun, secretary, treasurer (November 2000-March 2001), Barry Jones, treasurer (November 1999-October 2000), Vincent Robichaud, Paul Deveau, Kim Hughes (December 2000-March 2001).

The Management Committee met 9 times. Its task was to implement the steering committee's recommendations. Thus, in accordance with the directions given by the steering committee (see SGSLCS Co-chairs' Summary Report), the Management Committee was responsible to ensure the implementation of the general orientation and action plan of the Coalition in addition to ensure the efficient management of the Coalition's resources.



3. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Members of the committee consisted of : Irené Novaczek, Jean-Paul Vanderlinden and Barry Jones (resigned).

This committee took on the task of producing the report of the inaugural meeting of the Coalition. We also examined the recommendations made by participants in that meeting and used this to guide the revision of the Vision, Mission, Mandate and Values document. Proposed amendments are to be discussed and ratified at this AGM. Thirdly, in response to concerns voiced by the Steering Committee we have drafted two amendments to the constitution, for adoption at the AGM. Finally, in consultation with other Steering Committee members we have drafted a number of policies to help define and guide the structure and work of the Coalition.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments (amendments #1 and #2 as reflected in the constitution presented in the Founding Meeting Report)

These amendments to be moved from the floor and passed upon support from 2/3 of voting members.

- Amendment #1 In order to ensure good sectoral representation on the management committee, the number of MC members will increase from 6 to 7.
- Amendment #2 To better reflect the collaborative nature of the Coalition, we will operate with two co-chairs rather than a chair and vice-chair. These positions will be filled by one representatives from the federal government and one from the community-based sectors.
- Amendment #3 In order to facilitate progress, the quorum for the Coalition's Steering Committee Meetings shall consist of at least 9 of its elected members.

Proposed Amendments to the vision, mission and mandate:

These proposed changes seek to clarify but not to alter the intention of the originally drafted vision, mission and mandate. Detailed responses to individual points raised at the founding meeting are available on request from the coordinator. These changes will be moved from the floor of the business meeting and can be passed by general agreement (straw vote to test for consensus).

1. Vision: We envision the future in which the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.
No changes suggested, but recognizing that this statement is rather dry, we should look for some way to represent and promote the vision through art.

2. Mission: We propose to keep the current text with an addition, thus:
The mission of the Southern Gulf of St Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability is to promote the long term viability of its ecosystem through collaboration among stakeholders.

3. Mandate: Keep the current wording, with the addition of the word “equal”, thus:
As a forum of equal partners, the Coalition will provide ...etc.

4. Values: We propose to revise values 1 and 2 as follows:

1. Residents enjoy a high quality of life in a sustainable community.
2. Communities are empowered to be stewards of the environment and to shape and implement their own, sustainable solutions to local problems.

Membership Policy

Membership in the Coalition is open to

- I. any individual who lives in or has an interest in the Southern Gulf of St Lawrence watershed, and
- II. who agrees with the vision, mission and mandate of the Coalition.

Persons who attended the founding meeting of the Coalition in 1999, as well as any person who has made their wish to be a member known to the coordinator between November 1999 and February 2001, are considered to be the founding members for the purpose of notification of bylaw and constitutional amendments in advance of the 2001 AGM.

As of April 2001, membership must be reaffirmed annually by

- I. signing a membership form at the AGM , or
- II. filling in an email membership form, or
- III. signing on to the Coalition through its web site or
- IV. mailing in a membership form.

Members who have not reaffirmed their membership within 6 months of an AGM will be dropped from the membership and mailing lists. **There is no membership fee.**

For the purposes of voting for sectoral representatives on the Steering Committee of the Coalition, members are requested to declare a primary affiliation with one of the following sectors:

- I. Community organization,
- II. First Nations,
- III. Academic,
- IV. Renewable resource industries (fishing, forestry and agriculture),
- V. Processing / Manufacturing / Service industries,
- VI. Municipal government,
- VII. Provincial government,
- VIII. Federal government.

Steering Committee Policy

The steering committee is made up of Coalition members drawn from all sectors in all four provinces, of both official language groups, young, old and of both genders. Seats are apportioned to each stakeholder group according to the constitution of the Coalition.

Although drawn from various organizations and governments, steering committee members do not formally represent these particular organizations or government bodies.

They simply bring the perspective of that sector to the table, and assist the work of the Coalition by drawing upon their respective networks and resources.

The Coalition assumes that Steering Committee Members act in good faith by ensuring through formal or informal means that they represent their sectors accurately. The steering committee will be elected each year at the annual general meeting of the Coalition. Steering Committee members may stand for re-election any number of times. During the AGM, Coalition members in each sector will meet as a group and bring forth one or more nominations for each steering committee position allocated to that sector. Except in the case of federal and First Nations seats, sectors will strive for balanced representation from the 4 provinces (NS, PEI, NB, PQ). Nominees may be drawn from among the participants at the AGM, or may be nominated in their absence as long as they have consented to the nomination beforehand.

Names of nominees will be brought to a plenary session of the AGM. Each nominee (or a speaker for an absent nominee) will be asked to introduce themselves to the membership and briefly explain their connection to the vision, mission and mandate of the Coalition. If there is only one nominee per seat, the AGM may acclaim that person to a steering committee position. Where there are 2 or more nominees per position, the assembly will vote to elect the steering committee member. If there is no nominee for any position that seat on the steering committee will remain empty.

Steering committee members are volunteers. They may at any time resign their position, at which point the seat becomes empty. An elected steering committee member who fails to appear for two consecutive meetings without offering an explanation will be deemed to have resigned.

Because of the importance of hearing the voices and perspectives of all sectors, efforts will be taken to fill empty steering committee seats between AGMs. An empty seat on the steering committee may be filled through the efforts of other steering committee members who will seek to identify suitable sectoral representatives from among the Coalition's membership. Persons taking up an empty seat will have all the powers and responsibilities of any steering committee member and may stand for election at the following AGM.

Management Committee Policy

The management committee is drawn from the steering committee, as provided for in the constitution. If a management committee member resigns, the steering committee will elect a replacement from among the steering committee members of the appropriate sector, or, if there are none, by a temporary replacement drawn from another sector.

Remuneration Policy

Steering Committee members are volunteers. When they attend meetings, their transportation, accommodation and food expenses may be covered, up to the following limits and providing that the member's expenses cannot be covered by their employer:

Full price of a mid-range hotel room for which a receipt is provided OR
An allowance of \$20 for those who are billeted with friends or family

Full value of public transportation tickets and bridge, ferry or road tolls AND
For use of a private vehicle, mileage at the rate of \$0.20 per km

All meals in transit or during the meeting period

- I. that have not been provided by the coordinator
- II. for which a receipt is provided **and**
- III. to a maximum value of \$6.00 for breakfast, \$7 for lunch and \$13.50 for supper.

In order for our limited resources to go further and be applied to those that really need them, the Coalition encourages all those that can seek to have their employer cover their expenses to do so as an 'in-kind' contribution to the Coalition.

Policy on Letters of Support

A community group seeking funding for a project that is consistent with the vision, mission and mandate of the Coalition, may seek a letter of support from the Coalition for that project. The management committee will review the project to ensure that it fits the criteria, and then may ask the co-chair to provide a letter of support. The group will be invited to become a member of the Coalition if they aren't already, however, being a member will not be required in order to receive a letter of support. The Coalition may support any number of worthy project proposals, regardless of the proposed source of funding.

Communications Policy

The use of email and the web for communicating is both efficient and cost-effective. Communication between the Coalition office and members will take place primarily via these tools. The following guidelines will apply:

- I. All communication going out to our membership will be available in both official languages.
- II. The number of email messages distributed by the Coalition office to members will be kept to a minimum.
- III. The email messages will be concise and informative.
- IV. The emailing of large documents, pictures and messages with complex formatting will be avoided. These will be made available on the Coalition website.

Communications and the distribution of documents to members who do not have access to email will take place using regular mail.

All communications to the Steering Committee will be submitted through the Coalition office and/or Steering Committee co-chairs, and will be limited to Steering Committee business.

Information Exchange

One of the mandates of the Coalition is to facilitate the exchange of information among its members, and especially educational materials, case studies, success stories, etc. that can assist members in their efforts to improve the sustainability of the Southern Gulf region. Coalition members are therefore encouraged to submit materials to share with the general membership. The following guidelines will apply:

- I. All such materials will be submitted to the Coalition coordinator and/or co-chairs for their consideration. They may in turn consult with the steering committee.
- II. The source of all information released to members must be clearly identified, *i.e.* the person, group or sector.

III. If the Coalition coordinator and Steering Committee co-chairs consider material to be inconsistent with the Coalition's vision, mission, mandate and values, they may choose to add explanatory notes or request that it be edited or withdrawn.

Public Statements

The Steering Committee and Coalition office will not issue public statements on behalf of the Coalition that could be interpreted as taking sides in any particular debate. The Coalition may, however, publicly affirm the Coalition's position regarding issues on which the members have all agreed by consensus.

No individual member of the Coalition will speak on behalf of the Coalition on issues of public concern. This does not prevent any member from speaking on behalf of themselves or their respective organizations.



4. REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND WORKING GROUP PROCESS COMMITTEE

Members:

Bruce Raymond
Caroline Cameron
Claudette LeBlanc
Éric Giguère
Gustave Mazerolle
Joel Corcoran
John Legault
Mark McLoed
Carole Godin

Since the Founding Meeting, a Communication Committee and a Working Group Process Committee have been formed. Because most of the members of those two committees were the same, they decided to combine the two committees together. Since then, the new committee has met several times. Below, you'll find some activities that the committee is working on:

- Development of a communication plan.
- Development of a communication protocol between sub-committees and steering committee.
- Development of a bilingual Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability interactive web site including an online membership registry.
- Development of a logo.
- Development of a letterhead.
- Development of an outreach program.
- Development of quartely bilingual e-newsletters.
- Development of fact sheets.
- Development of media releases.
- Development of promotional materials such as posters, brochures, etc.
- Development of a bilingual PowerPoint presentation which will explain the Coalition mandate, objectives, and opportunities for diverse groups and interests to become involved.
- Attend trade shows or public events with a promotional booth/poster containing information about the Coalition.



5. REPORT OF THE OIL & GAS FORUM COMMITTEE

The issue of potential oil & gas development within the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence was raised at the Coalition's Founding meeting in November, 1999 as a priority area of concern. Coalition members expressed concern over potential impacts on the sustainability of our ecosystem, the lack of information about the plans for and implications of such a new industry in the area, how decisions are made, and the most appropriate means to address this issue. To this end, a broad and inclusive group of interested people have been discussing, in person and electronically, the most effective means to proceed.

Consensus was reached that the interested parties - government, community, First Nations, Fishing, Tourism, petroleum industry, scientists, and others - do not have a complete and/or adequate level of individual and collective understanding about the many dimensions of this issue. This constrains informed discussion, debate, and decision-making. The following questions, as well as others, remain unanswered for most people - What is the regulatory process in place for this industry and how does it work? What are the plans for and timing of exploration and development? Do we know enough about the ecosystem of the Southern Gulf and how it might be affected by oil & gas development? Can this industry co-exist with existing uses and values? How is information developed and shared? What role is there for the public in this process?

In the period of just over one year since this issue was brought to the Coalition for consideration and action, there have been some significant developments that have shaped our deliberations. A request was made to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NSOPB) for authorizations to conduct seismic exploration in the nearshore area around Cape Breton and work on environmental assessments began. Plans were then postponed. A study of important and/or sensitive habitat in the Southern Gulf is underway; the industry has held some local consultations; and a Commissioner (Dr. Teresa McNeil) was appointed on February 6, 2001 by the C-NSOPB to conduct a public review of the effects of oil and gas exploration and drilling activities within three exploration license areas around Cape Breton. Draft terms of reference for the Public Review are available for review and comment through the C-NSOPB web site.

Thus, the idea of convening a forum that would bring together the different facts, opinions, perspectives and people to address their information gaps, in preparation for a more informed debate on the issue, was proposed. While the group originally considered an in-person session or sessions, given the rate of change on this issue, the amount of information being generated, the pace of development, and the cost and logistical challenges of convening a broad and diverse group of interested people, it was decided to proceed, at least initially, with information sharing primarily through electronic means.

Therefore, a special Oil & Gas section of the Coalition's new website is being developed that will include access to and key information on - the regulatory process, federal and provincial policy, scientific facts/investigations, NGO views and concerns, etc.; basically an electronic 'information broker' resource that many can access and from which they can gain the information they require in a timely fashion. Those without ready access to electronic communications can be provided such by those that do, through their own networks. We are also considering the potential of timed discussions, regular e-news

updates, and other creative means, to ensure that the broadest number of people have access to the fullest sources of information about this issue. We are hoping that this approach will achieve our objective of enhancing and balancing the knowledge base among all those concerned and affected, and lead to informed debate and decision making.