

## **Sharing the experience: starting a radio column on the Coastal zone.**

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A column entitled "Welcome to the coastal zone!" began on September 13, 2011 at the radio station CKRO (Acadian Peninsula). It was created through a collaboration between researchers at the Université de Moncton, Elise Mayrand and Omer Chouinard, a student of Bachelor of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Anne Doiron, a practice partner, Valérie Boudreault (host of CKRO), and the community of Shippagan and area. I'd like to share this experience and describe the steps that led us to success. Perhaps this text will inspire others to develop a radio column and complete their projects.

In April 2011, we invited the community of Shippagan and area to attend a public meeting. We then presented the results of our research on environmental changes that have occurred in recent decades in the area of the Bay of Shippagan. We compiled quantified time series, based on historical data from various departments and agencies and from satellite images. We also collected qualitative information provided by local knowledge. Enhancement of local knowledge in this presentation had a very positive effect on participants, which may have played a key role in the mobilization thereafter. Following this presentation, which made it possible to show an objective picture of environmental change, we asked each participant to identify in writing his (her) three environmental priorities. One of the priorities that emerged from this exercise was to better inform the public about environmental issues and to raise awareness. This consultation activity ended with a call to all to build partnerships for action with the mission to each take action on one of the priorities. One participant, Anne Doiron, then expressed her interest in education and her desire to participate in an activity that would go in the direction of the first priority.

A radio host, Valérie Boudreault, had already expressed her interest to introduce a column on the environment. Anne and I therefore tested the waters to see if there were enough potential participants to maintain such a column. There was no question that we could not be the only ones responsible for these interviews because we wanted to cover a wide range of topics related to coastal zone issues on which we did not always know enough. The problem of hectic schedules also arose. We decided that the theme of our column would be the environment and modes of governance in coastal areas. We then presented the project to other researchers at the Université de Moncton, Shippagan campus (UMCS) whom we thought that their work could be related to our theme.

This was done first by email, but we soon realized that an approach in person was more productive. Indeed, a meeting can help some participants to better link their research and

our theme. For example, the work of chemistry on the degradation of organic matter can have spinoffs for the rehabilitation of bays affected by organic pollution. We asked each interested person to provide us with a tentative title. Armed with a list of ten subjects, including ours, Anne then contacted the radio host Valérie Boudreault to outline the project and propose a meeting. She enthusiastically accepted the idea of a regular column, but we still had to give it a radio "style" format and respect the technical constraints. Valerie explained to us the constraints (10 minutes of air time, separated by a commercial break, the column needs a title and a theme music, importance of simplifying the subjects). She also suggested a format that would become a signature of our column and a means of expressing the subject in three keywords: goal, action, result.

Now trusting that the project was feasible, Anne and I expanded our areas of recruitment and invited writers outside academia. We invited representatives of environmental organizations and research institutions, and we were able to develop a program for the fall. To standardize the interviews and ensure that columnists stuck to the theme and format and had information available to the public, we prepared guidelines we sent to each participant with the interview schedule. One or two weeks before a column, Anne sends a reminder to the person concerned. This person then sends a summary of his (her) column to the radio host and Anne. This approach greatly improves the quality of interviews, pushing columnists to effectively structure their intervention and allowing the host to learn about the subject and to detect jargon that could go wrong and should be popularized.

The UMCS Students Services have placed our ad on their Facebook page and on the home page of the University website. This allows us to reach students which are the leaders of the future. We are recruiting now columnists for the winter season.

The realization of the radio column, "Welcome to the Coastal zone!" is part of a specific project funded by the CCC-CURA titled "Perception of environmental changes and adaptation: the case of the Town of Shippagan." The financial assistance provided by the CCC-CURA has allowed us to get another subsidy from the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the Université de Moncton. Hence, our participation in an initiative of Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) allows us to express in an accessible manner to the people of Shippagan and the Acadian Peninsula important scientific knowledge for better management of coastal zones.