

Friends of Redtail Society
Annual General Meeting
March 1, 2008

Directors Report

Incorporation

Friends of Redtail Society was incorporated as a non-profit society under the laws of Nova Scotia on March 29, 2007. The Society was formed to pursue the purchase of land in the vicinity of the MacBeth Road, Pictou County which is owned by Wagner Forest NS. Ltd. and slated for clear-cut.

The tenets of the Society are:

- a) To protect and conserve forestland for the purpose of education and the exploration and practice of a new land ethic, which supports bio-diversity and sensitive, sustainable land use; and
- b) To promote community engagement in the health and wellbeing of its bio-region.

The incorporating Board of Directors of the Society are:

Nova Annette Poirier – Chair

Billy MacDonald – Vice Chair

Michelle Ferris – Secretary/Treasurer

Bernadette Romanowsky

Steven Wark

Following its incorporation the Board of Directors struck a committee to amend the standard incorporating bylaws to better reflect the activities and objects of the Society. The committee presented its recommendations to the Board and the bylaws were amended on December 8, 2007. Of note is the amendment to accept youth 13 years of age and older as full voting members. This is to reflect the support and interest in the activities of the Society by youth who have connected to the issue through their involvement with Redtail Nature Awareness.

Land Purchase

A great deal of the energies of the Board of Directors of the Society was directed to its most pressing issue, i.e. the prevention of the clear-cutting of up to 500 acres of land in the vicinity of the Macbeth Road and to that end, efforts by the Board to acquire a purchase agreement for 300 of the acres in question from Wagner Forest NS Ltd. The Society commissioned a photo cruise report courtesy of local forester Leon Joudrey, and sought support through provincial government departments, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and the Federal Department of the Environment. The Society also retained the services of solicitor Ian MacLean. In October 2007 the Society submitted through its lawyer an official offer to purchase two of the lots, the total acreage of which is 213 acres, for \$120,000 and requested that a third 100 acre lot be donated under the Federal Eco-gift program. Such a donation would give Wagner a tax benefit potentially equal to the

amount of the donation. In November 2007 the company responded with a flat out rejection of the Society's offer and restated their original asking price of 175,000 for 189 acres, keeping off the table any lands south of the MacKay Brook. The Board's evaluation of this asking price indicated that this was substantially above fair market value. The company stated that they would not entertain any other offer.

Left with no other alternative, the Society initiated a campaign to pressure the company to change its position. Press releases were issued by the Society and responded to unfavorably by company spokesperson, Russell MacKinnon. The society enlisted support from the general community and from people who had a relationship to the land through their involvement with Redtail Nature Awareness. Supporters wrote numerous letters to government officials, local new papers, Wagner's local office and to the President of Wagner in Lyme, New Hampshire. Numerous letters to the editor were published. Interviews by Chair Nova Annette Poirier and company spokesperson Russell MacKinnon were aired on local radio CKEC 94.1FM. Facebook groups were started, petitions were circulated and a U-Tube video was made.

The Society was greatly encouraged by this outpouring of support. Even though the interactions with the company were difficult at best, through this show of support the Board was able to keep faith in that, in the very least, the larger issues underlying industrial forestry practices were being brought to the fore.

The Current Situation

On January 25, 2008, Wagner spokesperson Russell Mackinnon made contact with the Society's lawyer Ian MacLean and presented a reduced offer; 147,500 for 189 acres but still retaining the land south of the MacKay Brook. On February 4, 2008 the Board responded with a counter offer, 220,000 for all three lots totaling 313 acres. Within a few days they received word that Russell MacKinnon was prepared to recommend the acceptance of this offer provided that the Society would agree in writing not to protest or interfere with the company's operation on the remaining two lots. The Board of Directors met and decided that they could not enter into any such collateral agreement as it could act to limit or in opposition to the tenants of the Society. The Society proposed instead that Wagner consider a second purchase agreement for the remaining two lots, price and timeframe to be determined, independently from the current agreement pending. The Society has not yet received a response.

Fundraising and Other Activities

The Board of Directors has been extremely pleased and touched by the support it has received. They attribute any positive outcomes to the actions taken by supporters and wish to thank each and every person who took part. It was especially touching that supporters chose their own mode of action, speaking and acting from their own hearts. Genuine concern and appreciation for the land was expressed over and over again by youth and adults alike.

In addition to the numerous actions that were taken, funds were also raised and donated. In May 2007, Shambhala School held a coffee house and raised approximately \$1,400 for the Society. Recently a group of youth who attend Redtail Nature Awareness held a concert and raised funds. Numerous people have made individual donations and several groups and individuals have fundraisers planned for the near future. There are currently two face book groups dedicated to sharing information about Friends of Redtail Society, one reportedly has 140 members. Again, none of these activities were initiated under the direction of the Society. Clearly, something very hopeful is a work here.

Friends of Redtail Society will be mapping out its own fundraising campaign if and when a purchase and sale agreement with Wagner is achieved. It would make little sense to attempt to raise such a substantial amount of money until such time.

The Board will be pursuing charitable status for the Society in the very near future. This was on our agenda on numerous occasions in the preceding year but was delayed due to the more pressing issues described above. It is a priority for the Board to now complete this process.

Presented and Submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors by
Chair, Nova Annette Poirier
March 1, 2008