



# The Gulf of Maine Expedition 2002

Vol. 1, No. 6

August 2002

*The Gulf of Maine Expedition is a sea kayaking journey organized to raise awareness and caring about the ecology and cultural legacy of this vast international watershed and to promote low-impact coastal recreational practices, safety, and stewardship principles.*

## ***Gulf of Maine Expedition Newsletter – Notes from Nova Scotia***

For a month we have been paddling in Nova Scotia. Everyone met during the Expedition has been incredibly hospitable but Nova Scotians earn major kudos for their extra special kindness. This issue of the *Newsletter* is devoted to the province and people of Nova Scotia. Look for final details of our journey in upcoming newsletters . . . or visit our website at:

[www.GOMExpedition.org](http://www.GOMExpedition.org)

### ***Thank You, Nova Scotia***

*by Sue Hutchins*

The Nova Scotia section has been an absolute delight! Some delights came to us . . . others we traveled to.

From Hall's Harbour to Annapolis Royal we were joined by Darrin Kelly and Megan Gahl on the water. Darrin's sense of humour and Megan's spiritual sensitivity were very welcome on the trip. It was a delight to get to know two of the original planning members of this Expedition.

Megan and Darrin had been team members long before Dan and I came on board. To quote Natalie, "Their role was to help envision this trip." Unfortunately, they were at a time in their lives where a two week section was the most their schedules would allow. So it was a treat to be able to share some paddling time with them. As we near the end of our trip, it seems appropriate to look back and say thanks to all the people who came before us and who helped manifest the wonderful

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### ***Fisheries & Tourism: Partners in Nova Scotia***

*By Natalie Springuel*

The wind is howling outside the tent and the surf at Mavillette Beach is a little bigger and a little whiter than even I

want to paddle on this stormy weather day. In the distance, over the drone of the waves, I hear the Cape St. Mary's two-toned fog horn. We are grounded by Hurricane Gustav.

We arrived in Nova Scotia almost a month ago. Although I have never lived here, Nova Scotia felt like a homecoming to me, because this is where the Gulf of Maine Expedition idea was born. In 1996, my graduate school buddy Pam Price and I paddled around most of Nova

Scotia studying tourism and fisheries issues. Now, six years later, I find Nova Scotians to be equally as hospitable and warm as before. And I find a province where

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*Robert Thibault, Canadian Minister Department of Fisheries & Oceans (center) with the Expedition team in Belleveau's Cove, NS.*

# GOMEX

## Gulf of Maine Expedition

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Natalie Springuel ~ Richard MacDonald  
Dan Earle ~ Sue Hutchins  
Tom Teller ~ Bob DeForrest

### AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER

Amy Minarik

### GOMEX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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GOMEX, an organization with geographical focus on the Gulf of Maine, covers an area spanned by Provincetown, Massachusetts, on the tip of Cape Cod, the north shore of Massachusetts, the 17-mile coast of New Hampshire, the entire Maine coast, and the Bay of Fundy shorelines of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, to Cape Sable Island, in the southwest of that province.

This newsletter is provided in digital format. Although subscription to the newsletter is free, all donations are welcomed.

If you would like to be removed from our email list, please contact any of the team members.

*Gulf of Maine Expedition* is published 9 times annually by the Gulf of Maine Expedition and edited by Richard MacDonald.



Map designed and provided to the Gulf of Maine Expedition by Heather Sisk of Seal Cove, Maine.

## Would you like to contribute to the Gulf of Maine Newsletter?

Are you artistic? Do you work with geographic information systems (GIS)? Do you have any other ideas on how to interpret the Gulf of Maine? Create a map of the Gulf of Maine, as seen through your eyes, and send it to us at 285 Knox Road, Bar Harbor, Maine, 04609. Submissions need to be digital or on 8½" x 11" paper. All designs will be considered and one contribution will be published each issue.

## Home in Nova Scotia

by Dan Earle

It is great to be back in Nova Scotia! Home. Isn't that interesting. I have only lived here for three years, but in that time I find I have discovered an inner connection to this place and landscape that has deep roots. The connection defies logic: it is a feeling of rightness of fit between me and place.

The character of this landscape is mostly soft. Yes, there are cliffs and crags and there are hard sea edges, but in the end, the sea itself, the vegetation, the fog and the maritime weather make it tranquil. It is a peaceful, unassertive landscape with great subtlety of variations and contrasts.

Seeing my new home from the sea has made me appreciate it even more. North Mountain is a very special landscape stretching along the north edge of the province. Its cliffs and lava flows are punctuated by small streams and quaint coves and harbours. Sea life abounds. The sea still rises in great tides changing the coast every six hours. Fog rolls in, mist develops, the sun strikes brightly, sunsets are glorious. The life of people goes gently on. All in all, it is a pretty darn good place to be.

## CALENDAR

***Please note that this calendar has many changes since the last newsletter....***

This calendar presents landmark dates for the Gulf of Maine Expedition, presenting dates we anticipate conducting programs in specific communities. Check our website for the latest information:

[www.GOMExpedition.org](http://www.GOMExpedition.org).

*September 28<sup>th</sup> ~ Clark's Harbour, Cape Sable Island, Nova Scotia.* Our final community visit. The town of Clark's Harbour is planning a reception to celebrate our arrival and the end of our Expedition with a big party. Greet us behind the Tourism Bureau (note: this is **NOT** the Town Wharf as listed in previous *Newsletters*) at 1:00 to celebrate the end of our five-month journey.

Interested paddlers may join the flotilla to escort the Expedition team in. A buffet supper will be served at Seaside Centre at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person and are being sold in advance . . . purchase tickets early as there are a limited number available. A slide-show of the five-month Gulf of Maine Expedition will follow dinner at 8:00. The slide-show is open to the public and is free of charge. Other activities will also be scheduled for the afternoon.

For more information or to purchase tickets for the buffet, contact Pat Hudson at 902/637-2940, or visit our website for more details.

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*(Continued from page 31, "Thank You, Nova Scotia")*  
times we are now enjoying. Thank you all!

Now on to the delights we paddled to. As we approached Annapolis Royal, we could hear bagpipes. Never before have I had a Town Crier and a bagpiper announce my arrival in a town while a flock of folks waved from the town wharf. What a thrill! The hospitality shown by Andi Rierdon, her husband Steve, and their friends, culminated in a delicious pot-luck dinner the evening of our slide show. How very Nova Scotian! Thanks, guys.

I have always loved Sandy Cove, a large, sweeping sand beach half way down Digby Neck. I now have many more reasons. When we landed, we were met by Mark Dittrick who informed us that we were invited for supper at Eugene and Marilyn Stanton's home: the fish chowder was on and the tea biscuits were in the oven.

Upon arrival at the Stanton's, we were introduced to many members of the "Stop the Quarry" committee, a passionate bunch of locals who are committed to stopping Digby Neck basalt being shipped down to New Jersey to be made in to highways.

The next day, as we paddled through Petite Passage the next day, we heard a loud bellow. Our newly made friends of the night before had decided to give us a final salute. They were on the far side of the Passage blowing conch shells. Being "conched" through a passage marks another first for this trip.

Belliveau's Cove was celebrating the official opening of their Farmers Market and a new interpretive boardwalk. Robert Thibault, Minister Department of Fisheries and Oceans, was on hand to cut the ribbon and chat with us about our mission.

Tim Surette, Area Director of Department of Fisheries and Oceans for Southwest Nova Scotia, was our host. He combined with the local tourism and recreation folks to expose us to many elements of Acadian culture, music, history, and cuisine.

So thanks, Nova Scotia, for the warm welcome shown to the Expedition. Now I know what the rest of the world knows . . . your hospitality is first rate!

## *The Acadians of Nova Scotia*

by Natalie Springuel

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, as we paddled along the upper reaches of Annapolis Basin heading towards Annapolis Royal, we skirted along several miles of dykes. At high tide, the dykes were 12-foot tall walls made of huge basalt boulders. Every half mile or so, the wall turned back for a few dozen feet and a strange looking round concrete structure sat about four feet off the water. Behind the dykes were vast expanses of marshland. I started putting the clues together and thought we must be paddling along what was once rich Acadian farmland.

The dykes, I would later learn, have been rebuilt multiple times in the last 250 years and the round concrete structures are the modern day version of the Acadian farmers engineering genius.

The Acadians were among the original French settlers to the Bay of Fundy shores. Their ingenuity in learning to farm along the vast salt marshes of the Bay was formidable and dates as far back as 1640. Recognizing that the marshlands of the Bay of Fundy were incredibly fertile, they devised a system of farming based on controlling the flow of fresh- and salt-water and transforming salt marshes into tillable fields.

The system was simple: they built dykes, or long walls, running parallel to the sea to keep the seawater out. Back then, the dykes were built from wood rather than rock. Then they built a series of sluiceways at strategic intervals along the dyke to let the fresh water drain out of the marsh. Within the sluiceway was a flap that let fresh water out while preventing salt water from entering. This mechanism was known as the *aboiteau* and was the original technology behind the round concrete structure I saw along the

modern rock dykes. Construction of these systems was a community affair as all Acadians within any region relied on the reclaimed marsh for subsistence.

English settlers often chastised the Acadians as lazy peasants because they were not busy clearing forest land and building up fields on harsh soil. The Acadian system of farming was, instead, quite sophisticated and likely more fruitful, too. In a few years time, once the freshwater had sufficiently drained out the salt, the field became ready for seeding and planting. Wheat and other crops were grown in these reclaimed marshlands, enough to feed armies of soldiers, as well as communities of Acadians.

Acadians were a peaceful people. They resisted being absorbed into any side of the French and English conflicts, preferring instead to be left alone to farm and live along the shores of L'Acadie.

However, the English settlers and army feared the Acadians were a threat to their sovereignty in the region and they also envied their rich farmlands. So great was the English fear and animosity towards the Acadians that it sparked one of the most traumatic periods of expulsion in the Gulf of Maine region. In 1755, "*le Grand Derangement*" began. This was a period of three years when thousands of Acadians were rounded up against their will, shepherded into boats, and sent down to the English colonies in what is not the United States. The Acadians were dispersed among the colonies who were none too pleased to inherit the refugees.

Within a few years time the French and English conflicts settled enough to allow those Acadians who wished to re-



*Commanding view west down the Acadian shores of the Annapolis basin as seen from Fort Ann, formerly a French, then English military bastion. Today, Fort Ann is a tourist attraction featuring some of the area's rich and diverse history.*

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tourism and fisheries still dominate most coastal communities.

At Sandy Cove on Digby Neck, a local fisherman and his assistants invited us to paddle into his herring weir as they seined one of the season's last catches. It was an incredible experience to watch these men pull in a huge catch of herring, mackerel, and the occasional harbor pollock. We seemed to share a love of the sea with these men. In between jovially ribbing each other – and us – they told us much about their work. The owner of the weir, a savvy man from a long line of fishermen, saw the value in helping outsiders understand how a fish weir works. If we tourists get it, maybe we will become involved in helping protect this traditional fishery.

The weir owner's brother, a lobsterman himself, has joined a campaign to stop a major quarry development on Digby Neck. Digby Neck is touted as an ecotourism destination because of whale-watching opportunities and incredible coastal scenery. Many locals, fishermen included, worry that the quarry and accompanying shipping could disturb whales and fish and have a lasting effect on the budding tourist economy. After a day spent on a grand tour of Digby Neck in the company of the lobsterman, our new friend simply said he is in this fight because, "It is my home, I can't imagine it any other way."

The people of Nova Scotia are grounded in this place. It is home. They love their home by the sea and want to continue living from its bounty. More and more, the bounty comes in the form of tourists paying money to experience the beauty and rich cultural heritage of the region. Not all locals are happy with the change but many see it as an opportunity to stay put and keep living in their seaside communities.

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turn home. Unfortunately, enough years had passed that their lands and homes were now settled by English families. The Acadians often found themselves homeless in their own homeland. Many stayed in the American colonies (some settled French Louisiana and came to be known as the Cajuns – a variant of Acadian), some moved to other regions of Canada, and some settled in new, less fertile lands within Nova Scotia.

Pubnico is one of those places. Pubnico lies in Lobster Bay in southwest Nova Scotia. I visited Pubnico in 1996 when I spent a summer paddling around most of Nova Scotia. I was delighted to find I could put my native French to good use in talking with the fishermen and local folks. Despite the atrocities of centuries past, 10% of the Nova Scotian population is of French origin, and at least four% still speak French.

For the rest of our journey around the Gulf of Maine we will be skirting along the French shore and continue to explore the history of the Acadians. Perhaps it is my own French-speaking heritage that draws me to these people and their history. Perhaps it is simply compassion.



## Gulf of Maine Expedition

We invite you to become a  
**MEMBER**  
of the

## Gulf of Maine Expedition

Yes, I would like to become a member!

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E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- \$15 Membership receives electronic newsletters and an Expedition decal.
- \$25 Membership receives electronic newsletters, an Expedition decal, and visor with embroidered Expedition artwork.

Make cheques payable to:  
**Gulf of Maine Expedition**

Your membership supports the mission of the Gulf of Maine Expedition to raise awareness and caring about the ecology and cultural legacy of this vast watershed and to demonstrate low-impact coastal recreational practices and stewardship

## GULF OF MAINE EXPEDITION

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Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

### People of the Gulf of Maine...

*This is a regular series where we introduce people who live and work in the Gulf of Maine, as well as having made a significant impact on our team of paddlers. In this issue, meet y...*



### Huntington Point, Nova Scotia.

By Rich MacDonald

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, we paddled out of Refuge Cove, a wilderness site in Cape Chignecto National Park, heading for Huntington Point. The hazy conditions prevented us seeing across the ten miles of open water from Cape D'Or. Using dead reckoning and GPS we made landfall on mainland Nova Scotia.

As this stretch of shoreline all looks the same, Raymond and Clara Jefferson hung out a series of flags to mark our landing. Raymond (picture center, white t-shirt with a red circle and white "A") greeted us upon our arrival and helped to carry our gear up the cobble beach. Clara (standing with blue shorts, third from right) served lemonade, iced tea, and cookies. Thus began our four-day stay.

Everyone we met was equally friendly. We were lodged in the "Blue House", one of a series of cement cottages made in the early 1900s, now preserved as part of the Charles Macdonald Concrete House Museum. Kathleen Slipp spent her 1943 honeymoon in this cabin, still lives locally, and visited us daily, bringing us gifts of garden-fresh vegetables. Myrna Murray offered us free reign on her telephone for calls and Internet access. Frank Martin brought us military rations ("In case you ever need extra food.") And the list goes on and on. When we left, seemingly half of the community of Huntington Point (pictured above) poured out to send us off with a rendition of "For they are jolly good paddlers...."

Nova Scotians have a well-deserved reputation of hospitality. Our stay in Huntington Point furthered this reputation. And as we travel down the coast toward Cape Sable Island, we are continually met with the same hospitality. Annapolis Royal, Sandy Cove, Whites Cove, Long Pond Beach, Belleveau's Cove, Mavillette Beach, Yarmouth: each of these places has a story of wonderful people, new friends, and fond memories. Nova Scotia is a special place.