

# ATVANS helps trail associations navigate government regulations

By Lois Ann Dort, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

If you love the outdoors, like to travel and have the ability to parse the meaning of government acts and regulations, you might want Corey Robar's job. He's the Trails Coordinator for ATVANS (All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia) and works to assist ATV clubs across Nova Scotia in creating and maintaining trails in accordance with the regulations of the province of Nova Scotia. Last week he made a site visit to the Cole Harbour Trail in Guysborough County to consult with the Chedabucto Multi-use Trails Association.

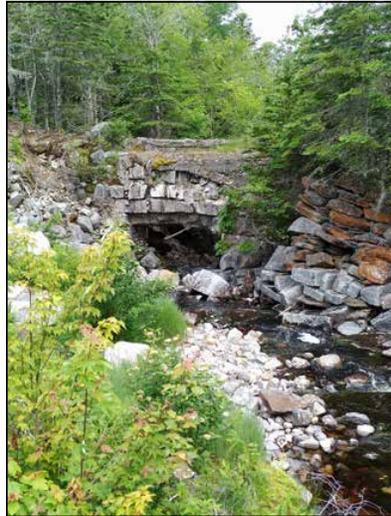
ATVANS' role, Robar told *The Journal*, is to help clubs get land use permission, assist in trail development, provide advice and help "them navigate the government spider web."

The Cole Harbour Trail, also known as the old Cole Harbour Road, is unique within the prov-

ince, in that it crosses through protected lands; the Canso Coastal Barrens Wilderness Area. "A portion of the trail in Queensport is under our Letter of Authority, or trail management agreement, with the Nova Scotia Environment Protected Areas branch. Without an agreement in place, ATV use on that portion of the trail in the wilderness area would be illegal..."

Around 2009 or 2010 the Wilderness Protection Act was changed and allowed us to get a trail management agreement for that trail," said Robar.

In his role with ATVANS, Robar goes "out with the clubs to the wilderness areas. The agreement is with ATVANS at the provincial level, so I go out to check on the trail. That gives me the ability to talk to clubs, to see if they are dealing with any issues and provide them with some advice



or see if there are any future projects they are going to need to do...It is going out and providing a different set of eyes on their trail."

As the agreement

holder with the province, an ATVANS trail permit is required for any off-highway vehicles to legally use the trail. "It's not trying to restrict access...we encourage



The Cole Harbour trail includes beautiful scenery such as this long-abandoned dam (left photo) and a bit of hard rock humour (right photo). Contributed Photos

people to join our clubs because it gives us a little stronger voice. It is starting to become the norm with some of the landowners, because they like to know who is on their land; they like to have one entity they can contact if something happens.

"Every time we sign a land use agreement form, there's a cost. We then have to have it under our insurance policy. Every time we add a kilometre of trail, there is a cost for us. That's just the insurance part and then the club has to maintain it," said Robar of the reasons behind promoting ATVANS trail permits.

More trails are in the offing for the area. Robar said of the expansion plans, "We keep adding more and more trails and not only does it benefit the ATV riders, it benefits all the other users who want to use the trail."

The President of the Chedabucto Multi-use Trails Association, Craig Jamieson told *The Journal* on Monday that one of the first obstacles to overcome in creating the Cole Harbour Trail -- linking Queensport to Cole Harbour, Guysborough County--was the uncertainty surrounding which government department was responsible for the land and providing access.

The proposed trail was to follow the path of a disused road between Queensport and Cole Harbour. It was eventually determined that the Department of Transportation would give permission for the association to go in and clear the path on what was still classified as a K-class road, despite it being fully overgrown and out of service for decades.

"The trail was very grown up, as you're

walking through you were pushing the bushes away," said Jamieson.

"It has come a long way since four years ago."

The biggest hurdle for the association was, "Putting the new bridge in out by the dam." That was costly and time consuming, said Jamieson.

Throughout the construction of the Cole Harbour Trail, the association received funding from many different organizations and government initiatives including ATVANS, Department of Health and Wellness, and the Canada 150 fund. To date, said Jamieson, approximately \$225,000 has gone into the trail including in-kind contributions.

The Cole Harbour Trail, which runs from pavement to pavement, is approximately 10 km long and includes some notable points of interest such as the WWII No. 5 Radar Base, a view over the coastal barrens and the remains of the dam which is reminiscent of a medieval bridge.

The trails association is on the cusp of developing a trail linking Canso and Little Dover. Jamieson said, "It is awaiting government approval. We have done most of the work, the trail is now waiting for aboriginal passing. Hopefully once that is done, we can begin that trail."

Many people enjoy the trail and Robar said there has been great feedback from the public. One of the trail association's biggest supporters, said Jamieson, is Rob Carter, proprietor of Lost Shores, "He's been phenomenal in helping us. He has maps which he marks our trail on, he's done drone footage for us in regard to helping us with future trails. Lost Shores has been a great help for us."

## JULY 23

# MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ST. MARY'S

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020, 6:30 PM  
ST. MARY'S REC PLEX  
164 OLD ROAD HILL, SHERBROOKE

fathom

## MUNICIPAL PLAN & ZONING BYLAW PLAN REVIEW 2020

The municipality is embarking on a Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) review and we welcome residents to participate in a community visioning workshop on July 23, at 6:30pm at the St. Mary's RecPlex. The planning consultants for this project, Fathom Studio, will lead the workshop session to gather feedback from the community.

Due to COVID gathering restrictions, we would like to plan for attendance by having people register for the event. In this way, we can make preparations for the number of people attending. Please call Hannah at (902) 522 2607 or email [planning@saint-marys.ca](mailto:planning@saint-marys.ca) to sign up for the event. For people who don't preregister, you may still be able to attend but space may be limited to walk-ins depending on the numbers and space restrictions.

For more information about the planning process and how you can participate, please visit [www.planstmarys.ca](http://www.planstmarys.ca)