



# 2019 NSEN Director's Report

## **Growth in Internal Leadership**

- While NSEN's Board of Directors had largely depleted by our 2018 AGM, we were very pleased to have several new board members join our team following the 2018 AGM and take on active roles.
- Board conducted a visioning session with a volunteer consultant in Fall 2018.
- Two more board members joined the board in Winter 2019, bringing the total to nine.

## **Administrative Improvements**

- NSEN now has PayPal set up to facilitate payment of membership fees and donations.
- NSEN now has its own Gmail domain (free for non-profits) for more professional communications (@nsenvironmentalnetwork).
- To cut costs, NSEN now uses a PO box instead of renting from Veith House (PO Box 27005 Fenwick, Halifax, NS, B3H 4M8).

## **Communications Officer**

- Contracted for \$20/hour.
- NSEN has an active Facebook page and website.
- Significant formatting improvements to NSEN newsletter, which is still being created and distributed monthly.
- Booths at Dalhousie and SMU volunteer fairs in Fall 2018.

## **Membership**

- Organizational Members: 5 new, 12 renewed, 11 overdue.
- Individual Members: 15 new, 5 renewed, 11 overdue.
- Need designated person to manage membership and fee collection.

## **Networking**

- NSEN attended Blue Beach Bash in August 2018 and made new connections leading to a public event on tidal energy in Spring 2019 (see below).
- NSEN has been an active participant in 2030 Network meetings hosted at the Ecology Action Centre to discuss the clean energy transition in Nova Scotia.
- NSEN has been participating in quarterly conference calls with the other provincial environmental networks (NB, NL, ON, MB, AB) as well as the Canadian Environmental Network to exchange information on activities spanning the country.

### **Indigenous Relations**

- NSEN was invited to attend the *Building A Circle* event at Millbrook First Nation in August 2018, intended to build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous environmentalists
- Attended by about 30 representatives from environmental groups and Mi'kmaq-led organizations.
- NSEN was well-received for our active participation in the group discussion and openness to addressing mistakes made by the previous NSEN team in 2017, where the Mi'kmaq felt underappreciated at NSEN's Eco-Connects gathering in Truro.

### **ECCC Campaign**

- After hearing widespread concern regarding a number of federally approved industrial projects in Nova Scotia, such as BP Offshore Drilling, we mobilized environmentalists from both inside and outside our membership in a campaign calling on Environment and Climate Change Canada to meet with those concerned.
- This campaign successfully caught the attention of Minister Catherine McKenna who initiated communications between NSEN and ECCC's Regional Director General for Atlantic and Quebec Regions.
- A Senior Advisor to Minister McKenna later approached NSEN for a November 2018 meeting to gather information on regional environmental issues.
- Environmental leaders in NS have since been prioritizing work on Bills C-68 and C-69 over meeting with ECCC.

### **Meeting with NS Environment Minister**

- While NSEN has historically brought together its membership for an annual meeting with the provincial Minister of Environment, this meeting did not occur in 2017.
- In November 2018 NSEN reestablished this meeting, bringing representatives from eight of our member organizations to the table with Minister Margaret Miller and others from within NS Environment.

### **Mi'kmaw Talking Circles**

- NSEN secured grants from Community Health Boards to hold public events bringing together local people from diverse backgrounds to learn environmental perspectives from Mi'kmaq Elders and participate in a traditional Talking Circle to build community.
- NSEN partnered with the Halifax Central Library and the Colchester - East Hants Public Library in Truro to carry out two highly acclaimed Talking Circle programs led by Elders Catherine Martin and Joe Michael.
- Seven Talking Circles took place through Fall 2018 and Winter 2019, each attended by 25 - 50 participants.
- Survey results showed significant growth in the participants' sense of environmental community and connection with Indigenous Peoples.

### **Public Engagement on Tidal Energy**

- NSEN secured funding from the Atlantic Council for International Collaboration to plan and host a public seminar presenting the many perspectives (fisheries, First Nations, government, industry, academia) on tidal energy developments in the Bay of Fundy
- Partnered with Halifax Central Library and worked with 8 panelists to bring all stakeholders together in public for the first time.
- Despite having to reschedule due to a winter storm, the venue was near max attendance.
- Took time to share Mi'kmaq history/culture around Bay of Fundy with educational videos suggested by Mi'kmawey Debert.
- Lots of good feedback on the quality of the panel, but definitely need a larger event to allow for sufficient panel time and sufficient Q&A time.
- Audience concerned with sustainable development practices, community impacts/benefits, meeting local demand vs. export, cost of electricity.

### **Going Forward**

- Looking to initiate a webinar series allowing for NSEN members to showcase their work with group discussions and potential collaboration opportunities.
- Need someone to manage membership.
- Need someone to manage volunteers and their roles.
- Need volunteer Communications Officer to reduce core expenditures.
- Want to host a large environmental networking event but need a large grant for this.
- Applied for funding to overhaul NSEN website.