

# Public Awareness and Education

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## Introduction

Programs conducted under the Public Awareness and Education Program spanned a wide range of activities. Talks, seminars, field trips, exhibits and courses were all well subscribed. Funding was obtained through the Canada-Nova Scotia Cooperation Agreement for Economic Diversification to carry out two additional prospector training courses as well as the one course conducted by the department in May.

In early July, the author, on secondment from the Department of Education and Culture's Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, took over the duties of the Public Awareness and Education Geologist from Howard Donohoe.

## Minerals Outreach

The Minerals Outreach Program is a program of information dissemination by way of guided walks, lectures, workshops, provision of information, and presentation of exhibits at selected meetings and thematic conferences. All were successful in attracting support.

## Parks are for People

Guided geological tours were given at four Provincial Parks as part of the department's Parks are for People Program. In all 171 people took part. The tours were conducted at Arisaig Provincial Park, William E. DeGarth Provincial Park, Five Islands Provincial Park, and Taylor Head Provincial Park. The most popular program was the Triassic/Jurassic boundary walk at Five Islands Park with 75 participants.

## Mining Week

National Mining Week '97 and Nova Scotia Mining Week '97 were celebrated together from May 10 to 17. Committees in Cape Breton and the mainland organized a variety of activities in association with members of the Chamber of Mineral Resources of Nova Scotia, the Mining Society of Nova Scotia, and the Prospectors Association of Nova Scotia (PANS). The Department of Natural Resources and Natural Resources Canada provided support and in-kind services.

The kick-off activity for Mining Week was a Prospector Day organized by PANS on Saturday, May 10, at ten museums across the province. Visitors were able to pan for gold and have their samples identified. Later in the week, museums, mines and companies who use minerals opened their doors to school groups for class visits. Three museums, four mines, two power plants, and a monument company hosted over 700 students and teachers for hands-on learning about the importance of mining. Several mines opened their doors to the public later in the week.

Early in February, the Mining Week planning committees agreed to host a Mining Week Poster Contest. Eighteen grade six classes in sixteen schools participated in the contest. Three presenters visited the classes, talked about mining, showed slides of Nova Scotia mining operations, and used samples to talk about minerals commodities. The students, teachers and principals were all enthusiastic about the presentations and contest.

## EdGeo Workshop

The department was a main contributor of expertise and materials to the fourth EdGeo Workshop, which was run in mid-August for 27 teachers who took part. Workshop leaders were from the Geological Survey of Canada Atlantic (Jennifer Bates and Graham Williams), the Department of Natural Resources (Howard Donohoe and Bob Grantham) and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History (Martha Devanney) as well as Kathy Silverstien and Dr. Henrietta Mann. The workshop was held in Bridgewater at the DesBrisay Museum and the Nova Scotia Community College. Teachers received hands-on experience in mineral and rock identification; learned about the importance of mining in Nova Scotia's economy; worked with museum education kits and were guided to several areas of geological interest during a field trip.

Next year's EdGeo Workshop will be held in Truro and the following year it will be held in Parrsboro.

## Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Show

Again in 1997, the department played a prominent role at the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Show (formerly the Parrsboro Rockhound Roundup). Involvement was highlighted by the presence of the Honourable Kennie

MacAskill, Minister of Natural Resources, at the opening reception and who later toured the show's exhibits. The department's exhibit entitled "Nova Scotia - a Mining Province" was augmented by gold specimens on loan from the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. It drew a great deal of interest. The department also conducted a field trip in conjunction with the Parks are for People Program. The field trip drew 75 participants who were guided through a 225 million year history of the Five Islands Provincial Park area.

## **Other**

Other activities of the Public Awareness and Education program included time devoted to the annual Universities Field School in Antigonish, the UCCB Summer Institute for Teachers of Elementary School Science, delivery of illustrated talks and lectures on varying geological topics, and writing for various departmental publications.

A special symposium on education was convened during the meeting of the Geological Association of Canada in Ottawa in May 1997. Nova Scotia presented a paper that described (1) the state of science curriculum in the province, (2) the activities of the department in support of the existing curriculum and (3) the educational efforts of the department to foster minerals and mining education opportunities.

Public enquiries for various clients seeking rock, mineral or fossil information and identifications were also answered as part of the program. The department also contributed a week's help to the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History in their field documentation of Isle Haute.

Several media interviews were given in response to news items on rocks, minerals and fossils.

## **Prospector's Assistance Program**

Through the Canada - Nova Scotia Cooperation Agreement for Economic Diversification, \$600,000 (total over four years) was provided to the Prospector's Assistance Program for training and prospector financial assistance for work on claims and marketing assistance. These funds will help build a strong and vital community of prospectors in Nova Scotia with the skills and resources to identify and pursue opportunities for mineral exploration and development, make new discoveries, promote and market Nova Scotia's mineral resource potential to the mineral exploration and investment communities and eventually develop new mines.

Planning for the Prospector's Assistance Program began in August and a full program plan was presented to a

committee of stakeholders for discussion and approval in October. The Prospector's Assistance Program has three components: prospector training, prospector assistance, and marketing assistance. The training component is the responsibility of the Public Awareness and Education Program. The other components are part of the department's Mineral Promotion Program.

Two basic prospecting courses were run in the fall. One was given in Halifax at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History and the other was presented at the Strait Area Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College in Port Hawkesbury. Both courses ran from mid-October to early December. In all, 28 new prospectors received training. Instructors were hired through the public tendering process: Craig Miller was hired to give the Halifax course and Lyndon Jensen delivered the Port Hawkesbury course.

Aimed at the novice, these popular programs introduced the beginning prospector to all of the fundamentals of what, where and how to go about prospecting. The underlying message in all of the training was to conduct exploration in a safe and environmentally aware method. Some of the topics covered included: identifying rocks, ores and minerals; safety considerations in outdoor field work; environmental awareness; recognition of an important mineral occurrence; using various types of maps; making your own maps; learning how to use different instruments; and understanding how to prospect starting from basic library research to field work on the claim to discussions with interested exploration companies. Students in the course received 44 hours of instruction split almost evenly between the classroom and the field.

There is a need for a self-contained and published course manual to accompany the prospector training courses. In order to produce this manual, a call for proposals was issued this year to hire a writer for early 1998.

## **Special Group Communication**

A strategy was devised to create a series of talks on the use, importance and value of minerals and geoscience in the Nova Scotia economy. These talks will be targeted at adult, decision-making groups such as Community Economic Development organizations, Regional Development Authorities, and Chambers of Commerce throughout Nova Scotia. The talks are currently being developed and will be delivered during 1998.