

TRANSITIONS INITIATIVE YEAR 1 (2021) BRIEFING

INTRODUCTION

In fall 2020, the Shubenacadie Canal Commission (SCC) officially announced Transitions—a three-year research and planning project to increase awareness, access, and usage of the Shubenacadie Canal Waterway as a natural and cultural resource. Transitions is managed by the SCC through the Executive Director, and advised and supported by the Transitions Advisory Committee (TAC) of stakeholders. The project is being implemented in three phases: (1) Consultation and planning (2) Research, design, and pilot projects and (3) Completion of new exhibits, displays, and learning and evaluation events.

Transitions is focused on two priorities:

(1) Work with stakeholders to raise awareness, conduct research, and fund pilot projects that highlight the rural river section of the waterway, including its unique natural and cultural histories, the world's highest tides, fishing, mining, dairy farming, and rapidly changing rural communities.

(2) Substantially rework and augment the exhibit space at the Fairbanks Centre in Dartmouth to include these research findings and to promote cultural awareness of the contributions of underrepresented people, notably women and families, Mi'kmaq, Acadians, Gaels, African Nova Scotians, and immigrants.



TRANSITIONS YEAR 1 HIGHLIGHTS

Transitions met several key deliverables in year one. Key collaborations and planning have taken place, and consultations to raise awareness and gain support will be ongoing for the rest of the project. Research and pilot projects both began in year one and are ongoing into year two.

A few of the first year's highlights include:

- Presentations were made to East Hants Council, Colchester Council and Stewiacke Council to introduce the project and strengthen partnerships.
- A Transitions Advisory Committee was formed to provide advice and guidance to advance the project. The committee is made up of 9 community members with a variety of expertise. TAC meets monthly or as needed.
- Staff and committee members consulted with the members from the following organizations: Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (Aquatic Resources & Fisheries Management and Mi'kmawey Debert), Arrowhead Park Residents Association, Grant Murray Designs, East Hants Chamber of Commerce, Nova Scotia Museum, East Hants Municipality, Colchester Municipality, Town of Stewiacke, Acadia University, Saint Mary's University, and the Shubenacadie River Commercial Fishermen's Association.
- Transitions was introduced in briefings with East Hants MLA John A. MacDonald, and Kings Hants MP Kody Blois. Reactions were positive and enthusiastic.
- An Engineering assessment of Lock 6 was completed that reviewed the condition of the site and provided preliminary cost estimates for stabilization and Lock restoration and park improvements. The Lock is in poor condition and needs extensive restoration work.
- A Research Coordinator was hired to advance research partnerships and to produce content and communications materials.

YEAR ONE PILOT PROJECTS

Four pilot projects were awarded, creating partnerships with new organizations and individuals. These four pilot projects are:

A for Adventure - Swim the Shubie Documentary

The story of swimming the 114km historic Shubenacadie Canal waterway. This documentary will inspire people to get outside and connect to nature. The Shubenacadie Canal is waiting for you to explore it, one lock at a time, all the way to the Bay of Fundy.

Dashboard Living - #MyShubieMilestone

This project aims to connect people with the Shubenacadie Canal Waterway through storytelling via a five-part video series. #MyShubieMilestone will focus on highlighting the sustainable uses of the Shubenacadie Canal Waterway, while creating a platform for those who have stories to share.

Nancy Chiasson - Ceramic Patchwork Quilts

Ceramic artist, Nancy Chiasson, will create original, impactful, and informational clay tiles containing subjects of the natural world, the lives of Acadians, and in particular Acadian women along the Waterway. The finished installation will be available for the public to view.

Waverley Amateur Athletic Association - New Waterway Access Point

Despite significant waterfrontage along Lake Thomas, the McDonald Sports Park and the community of Waverley lacks direct lake access for visitors to launch small boats, canoes, and kayaks. Transitions funds will allow for the purchase and installation of a public docking system.



FUNDERS

The Shubenacadie Canal Commission graciously thanks supporters and funders of the Transitions project: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Innovative Communities Fund and the Government of Nova Scotia - Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage

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YEAR TWO OBJECTIVES

The Shubenacadie Canal Commission has entered year two of the project. Year two priorities include the following:

- The Shubenacadie Canal Commission has requested that the NS Minister of Environment and Climate Change support, in principle, the nomination of the Shubenacadie River as a Canadian Heritage River. During the first half of 2022, we will be seeking local support for the nomination.
- The four awarded pilot projects will be completed, and the SCC will have launched the remaining three pilot projects.
- Complete an interpretive signage plan for the waterway, to tell the unique stories and history of the area and to ensure the material connects, educates, and inspires residents and visitors.
- Finalize the design and construction design for the Fairbanks Centre major renovations for exhibit space and new educational materials. The new displays will be inclusive to the stories of Mi'kmaq, Acadians, Gaels, African Nova Scotians, and women. We look forward to sharing these stories with Nova Scotians and visitors.

Transitions still needs support and partners. We are looking to be connected to organizations and individuals who are associated with the Shubenacadie River. We would like to expand our network to include cultural groups, environmental organizations, businesses etc.

We are also looking for support for the Canadian Heritage River Nomination and individuals who want to work with us to celebrate the cultural importance of the Shubenacadie River. A nomination process of local consultations and detailed documentation (Heritage River Background Study) will support the request to recognize the Shubenacadie waterway as a Canadian Heritage River.



ABOUT THE SHUBENACADIE CANAL COMMISSION

The SCC was created by an act of the Nova Scotia Legislature in 1986 to oversee and further promote the Shubenacadie Canal System including the operation of any information or interpretative centres pertaining to or belonging to the Shubenacadie Canal System. Our mission is to preserve the historic features of the Shubenacadie Canal and to provide access to a 114 km long waterway for the education and the enjoyment of the public.

The SCC achieves this mission through preservation, improvement, and maintenance of waterway and canal structures and features, providing for the maximum practical use of the waterway by shallow draft watercraft, interpreting sites for visitors, and providing park-like settings for residents and tourists. In addition to the above mission, the SCC is a registered charity and manages roughly 100 acres of parkland and buildings including the Fairbanks Centre. Further information on the SCC can be found at www.shubenacadiecanal.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Those interested in learning more or sharing information/research and/or pilot project ideas, please contact:

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