

GPI News

Volume 4, No. 2

June 2007

Special Points of Interest

- Launch of the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative
- Release of The Natural Step Primer for Atlantic Canada
- Ecological Footprinting with Mathis Wackernagel
- Gross National Happiness update

Thai Banquet Fund-raiser

Wednesday, July 4, 6:30 pm

See page 2 for details

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Launch of the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative

Atlantic Canadian municipalities, businesses, and non-government organizations have signed a pact designed to turn Atlantic Canada into a model of sustainable development for Canada and North America.

On Monday, May 14th, GPIAtlantic, The Natural Step Canada, and 15 “Sustainability Partners” launched the **Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative**. Partners include Halifax Regional Municipality, Bell Aliant, the City of Saint John, University of Prince Edward Island, iNova Credit Union, the Town of Wolfville, and others (see full list on p. 4), who have

signed a project charter committing their organizations to sustainability action plans.

The project was launched at a kick off dinner and workshop which took place May 14-16 at Oak Island, Nova Scotia. Eighty five participants representing 33 organizations, including municipalities, businesses, government departments, NGOs, and universities throughout Atlantic Canada attended this first sustainability training workshop, which uses The Natural Step framework — a sustainability training program used around the world — as its guide.

The new sustainability charter commits the 15 “Sustainability Partners” to attending intensive training sessions throughout the year, to embedding sustainability action plans into their organizations, to creating a collaborative network to support each other, to serving as role models and champions in their sectors and regions, and to seeking opportunities to help move the region towards sustainability. Specific actions will include reducing energy, waste, toxins, and greenhouse gas emissions, and adopting socially and environmentally responsible policies.

(Continued on page 4 . . .)

The Community GPI

Since the launch of the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index in 1997, the strongest interest in the project has been expressed by local communities who are urgently looking for ways to assess their wellbeing accurately, and to measure their progress genuinely. It is at the level of local community that “the rub-

ber really hits the road” in terms of quality of life.

Between 1999 and 2002, GPI Atlantic worked closely with the communities of Glace Bay in Cape Breton and Kings County in the Annapolis Valley to develop and implement the Community GPI project. A survey was developed to gather local community data on a wide

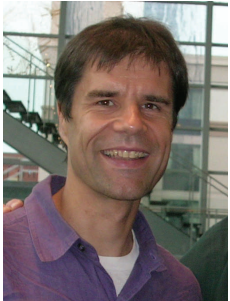
range of subjects, including employment and income, voluntary work and care-giving, population health, peace and security, values, and impacts on the environment.

GPIAtlantic is now working on the completion of a final summary report that will give a basic analysis of the data in both communities.

Ecological Footprinting with Mathis Wackernagel

On April 25, 2007, GPIAtlantic, the Resource Recovery Fund Board and the Nova Scotia Environmental Network organized two public presentations with Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, co-creator of the Ecological Footprint concept and Executive Director of [Global Footprint Network](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/work).

[Global Footprint Network](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/work) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the scientific rigor and practical application of the Ecological Footprint.



Dr. Mathis Wackernagel,
Co-creator of the Ecological Footprint concept

The Ecological Footprint is the amount of productive land area, including crop land, pasture, forests and fisheries, required to supply current human consumption and absorb wastes.

In 2003, Canada's ecological footprint was 7.6 global hectares per person, compared to 1.1 for Africans, 1.3 for Asians, 9.6 for Americans, and an average of 6.4 for high-income countries. Six years ago, GPIAtlantic released a report calculating this province's ecological footprint (the first provincial ecological footprint calculated in

Canada), showing that Nova Scotians used 8.1 hectares per person. GPIAtlantic also calculated an Ecological Footprint for Prince Edward Island was 9 global hectares in 1999. These reports are available online, at www.gpiatlantic.org/publications/environmental.htm

GPIAtlantic is currently working in partnership with the Sierra Club of Canada—Atlantic Canada Chapter and SENSE, the Nova Scotia education for sustainable development working group, on the development of an Ecological Footprint project for schools in Nova Scotia.

GPIAtlantic in the news and on film

GPIAtlantic has been in the news a number of times in recent months. Our website (www.gpiatlantic.org/media.htm) contains links to all of the media coverage that mentions GPIAtlantic. New articles are posted as they are published. If you see an article that mentions GPIAtlantic, please send it to our attention!

Here is a sampling of recent articles:

- February 23, 2007, [A burning question](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- April 21, 2007, [When one planet is not enough](#), The Chronicle-Herald, Opinions

- May 2, 2007, [Investing in fitness](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- May 14, 2007, [Sustainable development initiative launching](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- May 29, 2007, Tough on Crime, The Chronicle-Herald
- June 15, 2007, [Go global and lose control](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- June 17, 2007, [We depend on GDP, but it has its flaws](#), The Chronicle-Herald

The GPIAtlantic website also contains a number of film clips from

various GPIAtlantic events, including:

- The [ReThinking Development Conference](#) (June 2005)
- [Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert's visit](#) (September 22, 2006)
- The [Micou's Island Beach Sweep](#) (September 16, 2006).

We are currently producing a documentary film based on the *Re-Thinking Development* conference and slated for release in mid-September.

Thai Banquet Fundraiser: Great Food, Comedy and Music!

Master Chef Norris Eddy and the GPI Youth Team

Tyler Messick and Virgil Muir performing

Comedy by John Beale (Peggy of the Cove) for our Youth Auction

St. Mary's Boat Club, 1641 Fairfield Street

Wednesday, July 4, 6:30 pm

\$30 – Proceeds to benefit GPI Youth

Buy a table of 8 for you and your friends!

Call Rebecca at 489-7127 or email rebecca@gpiatlantic.org

Or go to the www.gpiatlantic.org/youth and pay online
MasterCard and Visa accepted

Help send 20 youth to Thailand for GNH3, The 3rd International Conference on Gross National Happiness!

GPIAtlantic research update

GPIAtlantic is working on the completion of the remaining components of the Genuine Progress Index. These include reports on economic security, debt and assets, agriculture, and education.

We are also completing an update to the 2000 Cost of Tobacco report, an addition to the *GPI Transportation Accounts*, and a summary report on the Community GPI project (see page 1 for further details on the Community GPI).

GPIAtlantic re-

Work is ongoing on education, economic security, debt and assets, agriculture, and more!

searchers Karen Hayward and Linda Pannozzo, with the able assistance of Patrick Ellis and Vanessa Hayward, are working on the Education report. A national version of the report will be released as part of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing this fall. A provincial report for Nova Scotia will also be released.

Researcher Jennifer Scott is working on the completion of the Agriculture Accounts, including reports on Water Quality

and Capacity, Social Capital, and Land Capacity.

GPIAtlantic is working closely with Andrew Sharpe, Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, on the research for the report on Economic Security in Nova Scotia. Kimberley Tran, former economist at APEC, is completing the research for the Debt and Assets report.

Janet Rhymes is working on the updated Cost of Tobacco report, and Aviva Savelson, lead researcher on the *GPI Transportation Accounts*, is working on the HRM-specific addition to that report.

The Natural Step Primer for Atlantic Canada

On Monday, May 14, GPIAtlantic publicly released [*Helping Communities Move Toward Sustainable Development: A Primer on The Natural Step for Atlantic Canada*](#).

This Primer was prepared by Dr. Peter Eaton and Dr. Janet Eaton in 2006, following the *Building Sustainable Development* workshop in November 2005. At that workshop, The Natural Step (TNS) emerged as a framework that would be very well suited for use in

Atlantic Canada. The Primer is a first step towards The Natural Step and its specific applicability to Atlantic Canada.

The Natural Step framework is a science and systems-based approach to organizational planning for sustainability. It provides a practical set of design criteria that can be used to direct social, environmental, and economic actions. The Natural Step framework is now being used internationally by hundreds of

organizations, including businesses, governments, municipalities, and non-profit organizations in their respective journeys to sustainability.

The Primer is publicly available and is posted on the [GPIAtlantic website](#).

Many thanks to Primer sponsors Halifax Regional Municipality, Aliant, Just Us! Coffee Roasters and the Town of Stratford.

Gross National Happiness update

In 2005, GPIAtlantic hosted an international conference titled *Re-Thinking Development: Local Pathways to Global Wellbeing*. This conference was also the Second International Conference on Gross National Happiness.

The concept of Gross National Happiness was developed in the small Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, where in 1972, Bhutan's King, Jigme

Singye Wangchuck, declared the country's intention to look beyond the conventional economic growth paradigm for its development strategy. He declared: "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product," and launched an effort to balance sane and sustainable economic development with environmental preservation, cultural and social cohesion, and good governance.

We are pleased to announce that the Third International Conference on Gross National Happiness, *Towards Global Transformation: World Views Make a Difference*, is taking place November 22-28, 2007 in Thailand. GPIAtlantic is sending a delegation of 20 youth to this conference. For more information about the upcoming conference, please see www.gpiatlantic.org/conference/followup_thirdconference.htm.

GPIATLANTIC'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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GPI Atlantic, in partnership with the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, also produces a colour tabloid magazine called *Reality Check: The Canadian Review of Wellbeing*. If you become a member of GPI Atlantic, you will receive a free hard copy of Reality Check.

This magazine is also accessible online, at www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck/index.htm

GPIAtlantic's **vision** is that decisions made by governments, businesses and other organizations in Nova Scotia, Canada, and around the world, are based on criteria that properly value social, economic and environmental assets.

GPIAtlantic's **mission** is to conduct research on the Genuine Progress Index, which measures environmental, economic and social progress and wealth, and to assist leaders in business, government and communities in using the GPI perspective in their decision-making.

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Launch of the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative — continued

(Continued from page 1)

"The world is on a collision course with nature, so sustainability is the greatest challenge of our time," says GPIAtlantic Executive Director Ronald Colman. "We are thrilled to see the growing commitment from all sectors in Atlantic Canada to taking action now and to making this region a global leader in sustainable development."

Committed Sustainability Partners who have signed the ACSI Charter, include:

- Antigonish Sustainable Development Committee
- Atlantic Institute for Sustainability
- Bathurst Sustainable Development
- Bell Aliant
- Halifax Regional Municipality
- Halifax Shambhala Centre
- iNova Credit Union
- Jacques Whitford Ltd.
- Just Us! Coffee Roasters
- P'lovers, the Environmental Store
- City of Saint John
- St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
- Town of Stratford
- University of Prince Edward Island
- Town of Wolfville

About 20 other interested organizations and government departments also attended the capacity building workshop.

Financial support for the May 14-16 workshop was provided by the Canadian Rural Partnership's Networking Initiative and the Resource Recovery Fund Board.

Make a Donation

You can make a donation to GPIAtlantic by faxing (902-405-1221) or mailing us this form, or donate online, using the CanadaHelps button located on the right side of our website, www.gpiatlantic.org. Please make cheque payable to GPIAtlantic or complete credit card information below.

Amount: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____ City: _____ Prov-
ince: _____ Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please circle: Visa / MC / Amex Card Number: _____ Expiry: ___/___