

GPI ATLANTIC ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

Ronald Colman, Executive Director

Regular editions of the *GPI News* as well as the GPI Atlantic web site keep our members abreast of latest developments in the GPI world, including report releases, new results, public presentations, news reports, and organizational changes. This annual report will therefore summarize briefly just a few highlights of our last year. For more information, please visit our web site at www.gpiatlantic.org, and see particularly our newsletters. A report on the Glace Bay and Kings County GPI is provided separately by Community GPI director, Marie Palmer, and is therefore mentioned only briefly here.

1. Report Releases

2001 saw the release of several major components of the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index -- the fruition of several years of research:

- The Nova Scotia Ecological Footprint
- The Economic Viability of Farming in Nova Scotia (part one of the GPI Soils and Agriculture Accounts)
- Income Distribution in Nova Scotia
- The GPI Greenhouse Gas Accounts for Nova Scotia
- The GPI Forest Accounts for Nova Scotia
- The GPI Fisheries and Marine Environment Accounts for Nova Scotia

Public release of these reports has received excellent media coverage in both daily newspapers, on CBC radio (news and interviews), CBC TV and Newsworld, ATV, Global, and on other radio stations and local newspapers.

In 2001 we also continued work on several more components of the GPI:

- The GPI Air Quality Accounts for Nova Scotia
- The GPI Solid Waste Resource Accounts for Nova Scotia
- The GPI Transportation Accounts
- Parts 2 and 3 of the GPI Soils and Agriculture Accounts
- Debt and Assets in Nova Scotia

The vast majority of work on these core GPI components received no outside funding, and has been supported through GPI Atlantic's own resources, including contract work, memberships, and report sales. For example, the income distribution, greenhouse gas, debt, and transportation components have received no outside funding at all; and the ecological footprint work received only \$3,000 (from NS Department of Environment).

The remaining components received funding support from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, Halifax Regional Municipality, the NS Voluntary Planning Agency, and Environment Canada's Science Horizons internship program (which is funded by HRDC). However all this outside funding together amounted to less than one-third of total costs for those components, with the remaining funds raised by GPI Atlantic through its contract work and memberships.

Due to lack of funds, we also suspended work in 2001 on two other components of the Nova Scotia GPI on which work had previously begun:

- The Work Hours component of the GPI, including costs of underemployment
- The Value of Leisure Time

There are also seven more components of the GPI on which work has not yet begun, including education, livelihood security, and the non-renewable resource accounts (including energy use).

Profound acknowledgement goes to the dedicated and skilled GPI Atlantic researchers, who produced outstanding work in 2001 for very little pay, and in some cases on a voluntary basis: Jennifer Scott, Colin Dodds, Jeff Wilson, Anne Monette, Dr. Tony Charles, Dr. Sally Walker, Dr. Larry Hughes, Linda Pannozzo, Minga O'Brien, Sara Wilson, Heather Boyd, Vanessa Husain, Gay Harley, Laura Landon, Karen Hayward, and Julia Cooper.

In addition, Anne Monette deserves special thanks for formatting and preparing all reports for final release. Anne developed a template for all GPI Atlantic researchers to use, so that all reports now have a common format.

1a) Reaction to GPI Forest Accounts

The release of the GPI Forest Accounts in November 2001 has generated a storm of controversy and a process of change that is ongoing as this annual report goes to press. Nova Forest Alliance Chair Dr. Eldon Gunn harshly criticized the GPI report in the press. GPI Atlantic then published a 135-page point by point response to Dr. Gunn's comments. The Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners Association, Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Environmental Network Forest Caucus, and Eastern Shore Forest Watch all disassociated themselves from Dr. Gunn's remarks, endorsed the GPI report, and withdrew their partnership and participation in the Nova Forest Alliance.

GPI Atlantic presented its results in two separate meetings with Bowater Mersey and Stora Enso, and has been invited to conduct a half-day seminar on the Forest Accounts, which will be sponsored by the Nova Forest Alliance in Stewiacke, NS, on April 10. In the last two weeks, the controversy has generated two call-in shows on Maritime Noon, and an article in the Chronicle-Herald. The NDP has announced plans to introduce a bill in early April requiring special permits for clearcutting. The GPI report had called for sharp reductions in the rate of clearcutting due to a significant loss in value to Nova Scotia's forests that has occurred partly due to current harvest practices.

2. Contract Work and Speaking Engagements

In 2001, GPI Atlantic also completed several other reports under contract, several of which are directly relevant to our core mission, and flow from earlier work:

- Cost of Obesity reports for Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. These reports replicate our Cost of Obesity in Nova Scotia report (2000).
- The Economic Impact of Smoke-Free Workplaces: An Assessment for Nova Scotia, for the Tobacco Control Unit, NS Department of Health. This report, too received excellent media coverage on its release, and produced a half-hour meeting for GPI Atlantic with the Nova Scotia Minister of Health.
- A separate (shorter) report on the Economic Impact of Smoke-Free Workplaces was subsequently prepared for the City of Ottawa. The GPI Smoke-Free Workplaces report is also being used by several municipal councils across Canada, including the City of London, Ontario, and Kelowna, BC, in promulgating smoke-free bylaws.
- GPI Atlantic is currently replicating its Cost of Tobacco and Smoke-Free Workplaces reports for the province of New Brunswick, funded by Health Canada
- The Cost of HIV/AIDS in Canada, completed for the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.
- GPI Atlantic produced an information databank, bibliography, and report on resources on unpaid caregiving for the Healthy Balance Research Project, directed by the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women (researcher – Karen Hayward).
- GPI Atlantic produced fact sheets and short reports for the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency on the Value of Voluntary Work; the Cost of Smoking, the Cost of Crime, and other wellbeing indicators for that province. The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Resources Minister used the GPI voluntary work statistics for that province in a speech in the Legislative Assembly to mark the International Year of the Volunteer.
- Impact of CAP Sites on Volunteerism, for Industry Canada, with an additional follow-up report on the social capital value of CAP sites.
- GPI Atlantic also prepared a submission on offshore oil and gas exploration in Cape Breton for the Public Review Commission hearings held in Wagmatcook, Cape Breton.
- GPI Atlantic recently negotiated contracts with Environment Canada (partnering with Jacques Whitford), with the Dalhousie University Department of Community Health and Epidemiology (for a report on the Cost of Chronic Illness in NS), and with Recreation NS and Sport NS for a report on the Cost of Physical Inactivity in NS.
- In addition, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, and the NS Department of Environment and Labour have agreed to provide funding assistance towards completion of current environmental accounts.

Speaking engagements and presentations of the GPI were one of the main sources of income for GPI Atlantic in 2001. A listing of these presentations, as well as other contract work, can be obtained by consulting past issues of the GPI News. GPI Atlantic

was also elected to serve in a voluntary capacity as a member of the Maritime Regional Committee of the Forest Stewardship Council.

3. Community GPI and GPI Atlantic Office

Until June 2001, management of the Community GPI projects in Kings County and Glace Bay had taken place almost entirely at the local level. It had become apparent by the end of 2000 that central management was very much needed, and in June, GPI Atlantic engaged Marie Palmer as Community GPI Director. In December, 2001, Marie hired Amelia Ireland as a full-time administrative assistant for the Community GPI. To accommodate the new staff, GPI Atlantic in June opened a new office in the Clean Nova Scotia building on Portland Street in Dartmouth. These significant additional financial commitments have been necessary to administer the project effectively, but they also produced a financial shortfall for the Community GPI project by the end of 2001.

Please see Marie Palmer's progress report on the Community GPI in this issue of the GPI News.

4. Other Activities

At the end of 2001, GPI Atlantic also joined with the Canadian Policy Research Networks and the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development in working towards a comprehensive joint funding proposal to Canadian foundations to support the development of a Canadian Index of Wellbeing. The leadership and funding for this initiative has come from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation in Toronto. The three organizations met in Ottawa in January, 2002, and recently presented their joint proposal to a consortium of foundations.

After extensive prototype development and testing, GPI Atlantic produced the first issue of *Reality Check: The Canadian Review of Wellbeing* in November, 2001, which was distributed to more than 4,000 Canadian opinion leaders, government officials, community organizations, and GPI Atlantic members throughout the country. *Reality Check* is published and funded by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. In its first issue, *Reality Check* published a map of Canada highlighting many of the leading wellbeing indicator initiatives that are going on throughout the country, and the review intends to act as a communications vehicle among these initiatives.

We are particularly pleased that *Reality Check* is being entirely produced in Nova Scotia, designed by Semaphore Design Company, printed by Bounty Printers, and distributed by Russell House Marketing, all in Halifax. Please visit the *Reality Check* web page on the GPI Atlantic web site (www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck)

In 2001 GPI Atlantic continued to issue its *GPI News* electronically to keep its own members informed of latest results, activities, and upcoming events. For past issues of *GPI News*, which has come to act as an informal archive of GPI activities, please visit the web site.

There has been increasing interest in the GPI Atlantic work in other parts of Canada. In British Columbia, a GPI Pacific group has formed and registered as a non-profit society with the intention of replicating and adapting the Nova Scotia GPI in that province. A group on Hornby Island, Vancouver Island, has been using the Community GPI materials, and visitors from the University of Saskatchewan came to Nova Scotia in August 2001 to investigate the potential for replicating the community GPI in that province.

GPI Atlantic continues its membership in the Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators steering committee of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, and four additional GPI researchers have been active in the NRTEE's expert cluster groups to advise on the selection of sustainable development indicators for Canada.

5. Organization, Staff, and Finances

The most significant organizational event of 2001 was the formation of GPI Atlantic's first active, working Board of Directors, under the remarkable leadership of Marty Janowitz (chair), Martha Macdonald (vice-chair), and John Leon (treasurer/secretary). Twelve outstanding board members have been extraordinarily active in guiding, steering, and overseeing GPI Atlantic operations and finances since spring 2001. Other board members for 2001-2002 are Paulette Sadoway, Andy Harvey, Hans Messinger, Gilles Deveau, Linda Pannozzo, Steve Peters, Meinhard Doelle, Jim Gimian, and John Odenthal.

Active board committees now include Human Resources (under the guidance of Paulette Sadoway, Martha Macdonald, and Brenda Crane), and Finance (Steve Peters, John Leon, and Luke Pelot). A development committee recently formed under John Odenthal; and we are still seeking to start a membership and communications committee (for which we need members). GPI Atlantic members are warmly invited to join one of these committees and assist in guiding and expanding our activities.

In July 2001, John Leon (treasurer) and Sara Winchell (accountant and bookkeeper) completed a new financial accounting system for GPI Atlantic that now enables us to keep track of the budgets and actuals for each individual project, contract, and report, and to monitor all finances carefully and effectively on a monthly basis. Starting in 2002, the executive director and the community GPI director have been meeting on a monthly basis with the Board finance committee to review the month-end statements. This gives the organization a new level of financial control and allows us to budget and plan more effectively.

Early in 2002, GPI Atlantic hired Cliff Esler as webmaster. Cliff handles all report sales, memberships, and web communications, assists with administrative duties and technical issues, and prepares materials for press conferences and other special events. He has been working on a full-time basis, and providing yeoman service to the organization since mid-2001.

Starting in the fall of 2001, GPI Atlantic has also been fortunate to employ the services of Parker Barss Donham, noted journalist and columnist, both as associate editor of *Reality Check*, and in preparation of press materials for GPI report releases. From January to May, 2001 (when she left to undertake a graduate degree), GPI Atlantic was also delighted to employ the services of Ginger Brooks as administrator.

GPI Atlantic has come to rely increasingly on contracts and speaking engagements to finance its core research activities. There is an increasing demand for GPI Atlantic research, reports, presentations, and participation in workshops and conferences. GPI Atlantic does not market its services, and these contracts come to us unsolicited. Because all our income goes towards continuing our core research activities and producing the Nova Scotia GPI, we have not had enough money to build the necessary infrastructure to support our expanding operations. This challenge is discussed below.

Based on money actually in the bank, the 2002 budget presented to and approved by the GPI Atlantic Board of Directors in January 2002 was a bare-bones budget that would require a significant scaling down of research activities for the coming year, both in the core provincial GPI work and in the community GPI projects.

Fortunately, we have, in February and March, brought in \$74,000 in new contracts and funding commitments for the provincial GPI work that will allow us to retain our research and administrative staff without layoffs, and to complete the air, waste, and transportation components currently under way.

We are at a similar turning point in the Community GPI. If we do not succeed in bringing in new contracts and funding commitments, we can complete the data collection and data entry for both communities in our existing budget, but may have to postpone the data analysis and reporting stages until we have more funding. We are currently negotiating a possible contract to develop a community GPI for the Halifax Inner City Initiative that will hopefully allow us to continue with our community GPI work uninterrupted.

Board members John Leon and Gilles Deveau are currently working actively to secure charitable status through an application to Revenue Canada. A first reply has been received rejecting our application, and we are currently challenging that ruling.

6. Future Directions

a) Organizational Priorities

GPI Atlantic is at another significant turning point in its history. There is a tremendous opportunity for us not only to respond to the growing demand for our research, methods,

and presentations, but also to expand our activities by marketing our work more actively. But we can only do so if we create the necessary organizational and administrative infrastructure to do so. Currently we do not have the capacity even to respond to the many requests we received, and we have to turn down some of these offers.

We are overworked, largely because we are still supporting our core unfunded work through outside contracts and saving money through lack of adequate infrastructure, office, and administrative support. As executive director, I can no longer carry on the multiple functions of running and overseeing the organization, supervising the research of our research staff, raising funds and negotiating new contracts, and actually doing research, writing reports, and undertaking contracts and speaking engagements.

Therefore the first and top priority of the coming months is to raise enough money to hire an executive director to take over the running of the organization, and an administrative assistant to support the executive director, thus freeing up the current executive director to focus on the research director role.

In the last 2 months, we have raised the first \$22,000 towards that position through setting aside a portion of new contracts, and we will continue to fundraise for that goal. Cliff Esler is also raising money for this goal through actively marketing our reports to libraries and expanding memberships. If we can achieve this fundraising goal and hire for these two new positions, we will be in a much better position to respond to the expanding requests for our services, and even to market our work more widely (for example in replications of our reports for other provinces.)

b) Core GPI Goals

For our core provincial GPI work, our current and most immediate goal is to complete those components of the index that are currently under way and already begun (see above), so that three-fourths of the Genuine Progress Index will be complete by fall 2002. Simultaneously, and if we can raise the money to do so, we have two major goals for the coming year:

- 1) Conduct a concentrated consultation and retreat with all the GPI Atlantic researchers and other experts and advisers to identify the most important core indicators and results from all the work completed over the last four years. The goal is to roll these results out by fall, 2002, as our first presentation of the composite Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index. That is - assessing all the results to date, how are we doing as a province, and what are our annual benchmarks of progress?
- 2) Construct a composite database of all our spreadsheets, tables, and charts from all our reports to date that will allow easy updates as future data become available, and that will enable us to link data and provide researchers with easy access to all the GPI results. Our goal is to have researcher Anne Monette undertake this task as soon as she has finished the Air Quality report.

c) Community GPI

As noted above, our current goal is to complete the data collection and data entry for Glace Bay and Kings County, and also to complete a supplementary business survey in both communities. As this annual report goes to press, we are pleased to announce that we have engaged Brad Long as Kings County GPI manager to complete data collection of the remaining 900 surveys in that community. As noted, we are also currently negotiating a possible contract to construct a community GPI for the Halifax Inner City Initiative.

d) Membership and Report Dissemination

We want to involve our members more actively in our activities (eg through committee participation), expand our member base and the dissemination of our reports (particularly to libraries). These are our most reliable, independent sources of support, and can help GPI Atlantic become more and more self-reliant. We wish to end this report by thanking all the members who have continued to support our work in the last year, and urge you to continue doing so in 2002.