

WHYCOCOMAGH  
WATERFRONT CENTRE



“Where People and Nature Connect”

**Presentation to Inverness County Council**

**February 20, 2020**

**By The Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre Association Board**

# Purpose for Presentation

The Board of the Whycomomagh Waterfront Centre Association is formally requesting that Council recognize the importance of the Whycomomagh Waterfront Centre within the Village of Whycomomagh and County of Inverness and in so doing, provide recognition of this Centre as one of Inverness County's Cultural Centres. As such, any financial contribution by the County to such Centres would be similarly provided to our Association to assist with its operation.

# CONGRUENT OUTCOMES RE: MISSION/MANDATES

## **Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage**

Statement of Mandate: Nova Scotia's diverse culture and history contributes to vibrant communities that make life better for families in every part of the province.

### **Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre Association**

Statement of Mission/Mandate: Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre Association mission is to continue enhancing the development of our facilities within the heart of the community. While promoting involvement and fostering community togetherness, the Board will encourage membership growth through affordable self-supporting activities and events that reflect the development and capitalization of the Centre's central location within Cape Breton. We will provide opportunities for the growth of water-based activities, expand and promote our head of the waters location, as well as develop recreational, social and cultural activities.

# Current Positioning of Inverness County Cultural Centres

According to the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan in 2010:

There are five key cultural centres in the Municipality:

- 1)The Celtic Interpretive Centre, Judique (promotion of traditional Celtic Music)
- 2)Strathspey Place, Mabou (Performing Arts Centre)
- 3)Inverness County Centre for the Arts, Inverness (presentation and performance venue)
- 4)The MiCarême Centre, Grand E'tang (Acadian Festival/Culture)
- 5)Place des Arts Pere Anselme Chiasson Auditorium, Cheticamp (400 Seat théâtre, performance)

**Note: Each of the currently recognized Cultural Centres are located on the western coastline of Cape Breton Island.**

## Inverness County Website Home Page

“Inverness County, [Canada’s Musical Coast](#), comprises the entire western coastline of Cape Breton Island, including the world famous Cabot Trail and reaches inland as far as the beautiful **Bras d’Or Lakes**. Canada’s Musical Coast is a string of beautiful communities and majestic coastline vistas bound together by musical traditions.”

The current home page for the County recognizes that we are bound together by the geography, traditions and people along the western side of Cape Breton (including the Cabot Trail) and inland to the Bras d’Or Lakes, yet the region surrounding the Bras d’Or Lakes has received no cultural recognition. Whycocomagh and the adjacent We’koqma’q First Nation Community are the first communities accessed by tourist traffic passing through Central Cape Breton and the largest Inverness County communities situated on the Lakes.

# Shared Initiatives and Goals

## Initiatives of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan in 2010

According to this plan, sustainability initiatives or planning for the county focuses on: Volunteer Sector Strategy, Recreation NS planning initiatives, CHBs community health plans Consistent with ICSP focus of:

- Social: Creating programs and processes that will assist in sustaining the volunteer sector's contribution to the quality of life of the Municipality;
- Social: Collaborating with various stakeholders in order to promote and adopt population health principles which foster healthy vibrant communities;
- Social: Fostering outdoor recreation opportunities/participation and active healthy lifestyles through the support, promotion and development of local recreation infrastructure and assets.
- Cultural: Engaging youth in ongoing visioning, sustainability planning and community based development.

Underlying theme addressed by action/strategy:

Volunteer Sector Sustainability Outcome:

**Quality of Life, Social and Human Health”.**

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**The Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre as a Community Cultural Centre**

**As a Board, we have and will continue, to promote these initiatives.**

# Shared Priorities

A steering committee of the Municipality identified the following priorities by the Inverness County Sustainability Plan in 2010:

**Social** · Creating programs and processes that will assist in sustaining the volunteer sector's contribution to the quality of life of the Municipality; · Collaborating with various stakeholders in order to promote and adopt population health principles which foster healthy vibrant communities; · Fostering outdoor recreation opportunities/participation and active healthy lifestyles through the support, promotion and development of local recreation infrastructure and assets.

**Culture** · Enhancing, supporting and promoting the distinct subcultures and languages which collectively makeup the unique identity of the Municipality of the County of Inverness; · Enhancing tourism through the support and promotion of community festivals and events and local cultural and natural infrastructure; · Engaging youth in ongoing visioning, sustainability planning and community based development.'

**The Board of the Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre shares many of these priorities and recognizes the importance of the Waterfront Centre as an essential and sustainable means to achieve and maintain social and cultural experiences for the surrounding communities and for visiting tourists. These activities are often intertwined.**

# **Success to Date of the Whycomomagh Waterfront Centre As a Cultural, Social, Recreational and Economic Driver**

- In 2011, the Whycomomagh Waterfront Centre Association became a non-profit organization formed with the Registered Society of Joint Stocks.
- The function of the Board at the time was to continue maintaining the community wharf and to develop the derelict Legion building into a state of the art community facility on the shores of the Bras d'Or Lakes.
- The renovation process of the Centre was completed as a result of 1000+ hours provided by the volunteer board. We were able to preserve and revitalize this location which has had many cultural implications within the community throughout the years.
- Once the facility was completed, it soon became apparent that the Centre was becoming the hub of the village and surrounding communities for many of its social and cultural activities, in addition to the recreational activities surrounding the Bay.
- The Centre's strategic location has also become an economic driver due to its central location on the TCH within Cape Breton.
- The goals of our Board have been evolving as the needs for the community change.

# Examples of Cultural, Social, Recreational and Economic Activities By the Board

- **For Youth:** Gatherings such as Christmas, Annual Canada Day Events, Summer Festival activities aimed at children (square dances, canoe races, music workshops, campfire sing-alongs, tug of war, games and other such activities), movie nights and dances, paint workshops, hiphop workshop, previous camps including sailing camp and art/music camp, magic shows. We also put on Winterlude on an annual basis which encourages participation by youth. We have had some youth join in on the jam sessions taking part in the ring and gaining much confidence. We encourage their participation in hiking and snowshoeing events. In addition, the facility has been utilized by other community members and groups for events for children.

# Activities for Seniors

- **For Seniors** we have the walking program twice a week which has been ongoing for approximately 8 years. This includes an important socialization aspect, along with the physical activity of walking safely inside a building, in addition to the card play over a cup of tea. We have had seniors take part in a yoga program. They come out to our weekly jam session every Thursday and a number enjoy Trivia Night. They support most of the concerts and musical events we hold and enjoy all of the activities where food is offered. Outside of church, this is the only source of socialization and cultural activities for many seniors. They also support all of the events we put on annually. The seniors group also meet in the Centre now once a week from spring to fall. The seniors have a strong connection with the Centre.

# Activities for the Community and for Tourists

- Twice Weekly Walking program for Seniors
- Weekly jam sessions
- One of the primary organizers and locations for most Summer Festival Activities
- Help organize and host Christmas in the Village activities
- Host Canada Day activities for the past 8 years
- Hold annual yard sale/barbecue where people can recycle their goods
- Provide recycling station for bottles for community
- Hold Winterlude once a year with recreation, music and food
- Holding new series of “Embrace Winter Along the Shores of Hogoma”, being held twice a month with recreation, music and food

# Activities Continued

- Have hosted many hiking events and have encouraged other recreation such as yoga classes and women wellness type events
- Have hosted many, many musical events with local talent and recognized talent from across the Maritimes, including as part of Kitchenfest and Celtic Colours
- We hold Trivia night on a regular basis
- Have held various special days such as a Women's Health Day, Art Shows, markets, workshops and seasonal events
- We have made the Centre accessible once again for the Legion, which originally owned the building, including a pergola and cenotaph area enjoyed by locals and very regularly by tourists.
- We are part of the Blue Route for the Great Trail and have encouraged larger recreational boaters to access the ramps at the wharf area and a ramp installed at the Centre for canoes, kayaks
- We are always seeking new methods to address community needs as required, such as winter clothing drive this winter.

# Use by Other Groups

- The Centre continues to be used by the Legion as a meeting place.
- Groups such as the daycare use the facility as needed.
- The facility is used as a community gathering space for special events.
- The Centre has been rented out very regularly by external groups such as the Department of Health due to its central location within their zone. This has resulted in economic development due to the need of these groups for food, lodging and gasoline. It has also resulted in a desire to return to the county by attendees having experienced what the area has to offer.

# Benefits of Being Recognized as a Cultural Centre

- To date, activities at the Centre have for the most part been a result of volunteer hours. The only exception is that we have paid a stipend for snow removal and to have someone help with rental bookings, along with providing a job opportunity for a student during the summer.
- The facility has room to grow in terms of better utilizing the lower level. To achieve this, we eventually need to pave the parking area to make safer, due to the grade of the property.
- We can take more risks when it comes to providing cultural activities when we have more secure resources in place. We would like to continue to encourage activities that help make the community more vibrant and ensure a better quality of life.
- We see opportunity to promote more workshops and networking sessions within the facility.
- Our location along the bras d'Or Lake and adjacent to the First Nations community can present opportunities not present anywhere else within Inverness County.

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**PROMOTIONAL VIDEO**