

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

Based in Sherbrooke, NS, the SMRA was established in the late 1970s with the primary purpose of preserving the ecosystem and enhancing salmon habitat on the river. The vision of the SMRA is "health for the river, the Atlantic salmon, and our community". To date over 20km of river have been restored, with many additional projects still underway. The SMRA has in excess of 100 active members.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The St Marys River Association (SMRA) is actively involved in promoting the environmental, cultural, recreational and natural benefits of their historic river and are working towards having this landscape recognized as a heritage river. There have been many projects undertaken to gather data and information towards this cause, however, challenges remain in communicating the many important features found in the St. Marys River to the public. An interactive map would be an informative, interactive and community-engaging tool that would convey and illustrate the many stories that this river holds via the internet. St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) has the technology and necessary expertise of StFX's GIS professional to create such a map, and as being the closest institution to the community organization, the ability to facilitate knowledge, data and information between the two groups will expedite this process.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

Having the map in this interactive format will provide an invaluable resource management tool for the SMRA that would enable a modern and straightforward method of disseminating important information to the public, and for education purposes at local schools and colleges. Having a single resource that captures all aspects of the topography of the river and describes and promotes the extensive riparian and habitat conservation work carried out by the SMRA and others, will provide a 'one-stop-shop' for viewers to understand the importance, and the complexity, of this unique river valley ecosystem.

Rural Guysborough is suffering from a falling, and aging population so projects such as these are important from promoting tourism and the natural history of the river, as well as encouraging outside investment. The Heritage River status for the St. Mary's River is an important tool to promote and preserve the history of the area. The mapping tool will be a great method for sharing information with residents, tourists, salmon anglers and other stakeholders to ensure that people are well informed and knowledgeable about the importance of this unique ecosystem.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2021.