

# Keep Coxheath Clean

## Issue Response Presentation

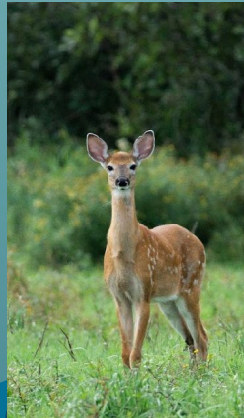


Land sale for proposed copper/metals mine

November 14, 2023



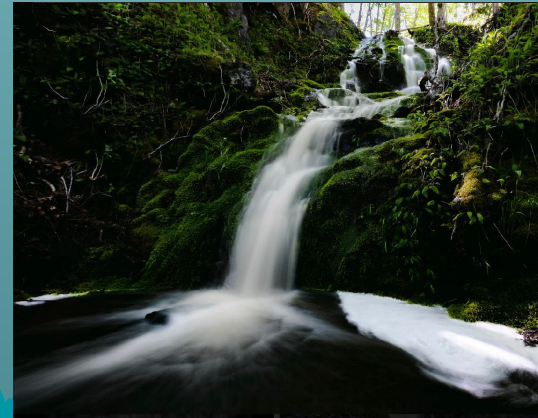
Gillis Lake  
Credit: James Forsey



Beechmont Wildlife  
Credit: James Forsey



Coxheath Wildlife  
Credit: James Forsey



Hidden Waterfall - 870 metres from CBRM  
Land  
Credit: James Forsey

# Issue Response Topics

- 1**    **What is Keep Coxheath Clean?**
- 2**    **Environmental concerns**
- 3**    **Economic concerns**
- 4**    **Alternative options**

# What is the Keep Coxheath Clean Association?



# We have heard from the community

We are a registered non-profit organization representing 1150+ concerned constituents

In August, a motion to vote on the Coxheath/Beechmont land surplus for the purpose of sale to Nova Copper was suspended thanks to quick action & public pressure

We request the indefinite suspension of the motion to sell the Coxheath/Beechmont property pending consideration for other land use options

# ISSUE PAPER

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Wayne MacDonald, P.Eng.  
Director of Engineering and Public Works

**SUBJECT:** Properties at Beechmont, CBRM  
PID's: 15085996; 15320682; 15774755; 15774748;  
15774763; 15774771; 15774789 and 15774797  
Request to Deem CBRM Property Surplus

**DATE:** August 22nd, 2023

## INFORMATION:

The applicant is requesting to purchase the subject properties for development of a mineral extraction operation. The subject properties are identified as PID 15085996; 15320682; 15774755; 15774748; 15774763; 15774771; 15774789 and 15774797 and outlined in red on the attached map (Attachment "A").

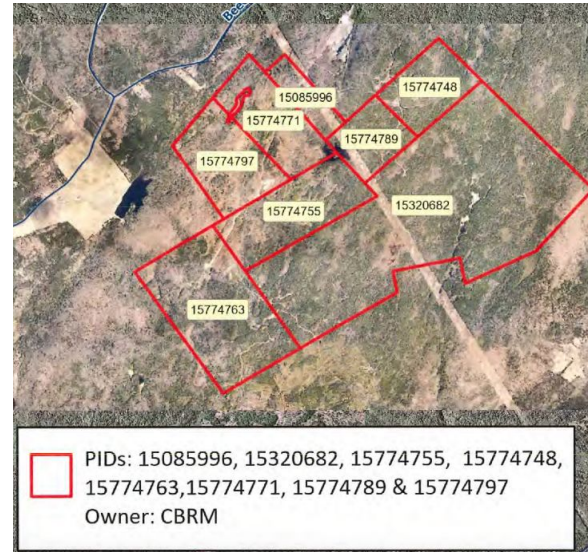
Currently the Cape Breton Partnership has been working on CBRM's behalf with Nova Copper Mines Limited, and options for land acquisition have been discussed. For land acquisition to occur, CBRM Council would be required to deem the identified properties surplus to the needs of the municipality.

The properties contain a total of approximately 1002 acres and a total assessed value for \$140,300.

## RECOMMENDATION:

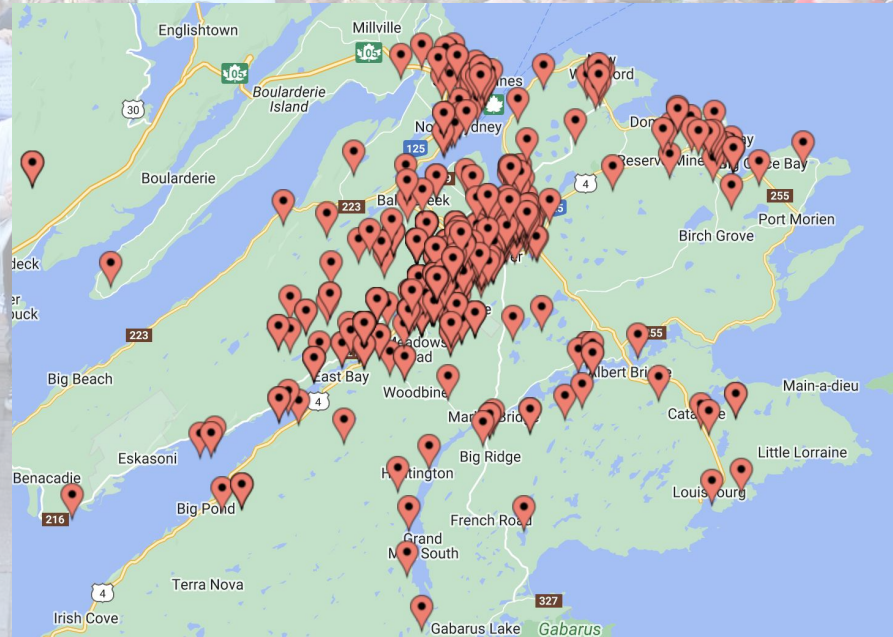
Staff is seeking a motion from Council to deem the subject properties identified surplus to the needs of the municipality and sell at market value to Nova Copper Mines Inc., subject to:

1. Development of a mining operation within 20 years from date of conveyance. Should the properties not be developed within that time frame; the properties shall be sold back to the municipality at the same price as sold to the applicant.
2. The sale is subject to a right of first refusal in favor of the municipality; purchase price to be at the same price as sold to the applicant.



# We speak for the community

**1150+ individuals have signed a petition, with their contact information, specifically in opposition of the sale of the land for mining purposes**



# We have spoken to experts

**Dr. Steven H. Emerman - Geophysics, Hydrology and Mining Expert**

**Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers**

**Local Hydrogeologist**

**Local Economist**

**CBU Chemistry, Biology and Environmental Studies**

**NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables**

**NS Department of Environment and Climate Change**

**Ecology Action Centre**

**Nature Photographers Kris Tynski and James Forsey**



# Environmental Concerns

Mines will always be needed, though should not be located and operated in proximity to watersheds and species at risk



Photo by Kris Tynski  
Beechmont



# Background - Historical mine site

- The old Coxheath mine site operation periods of 1878-1891, 1899-1901, and 1928-1930
- Much less than 1 sq km in size, historically a small drilled mine site
- Limited environmental impact and little nearby population
- Facilities no longer exist



1893



1925



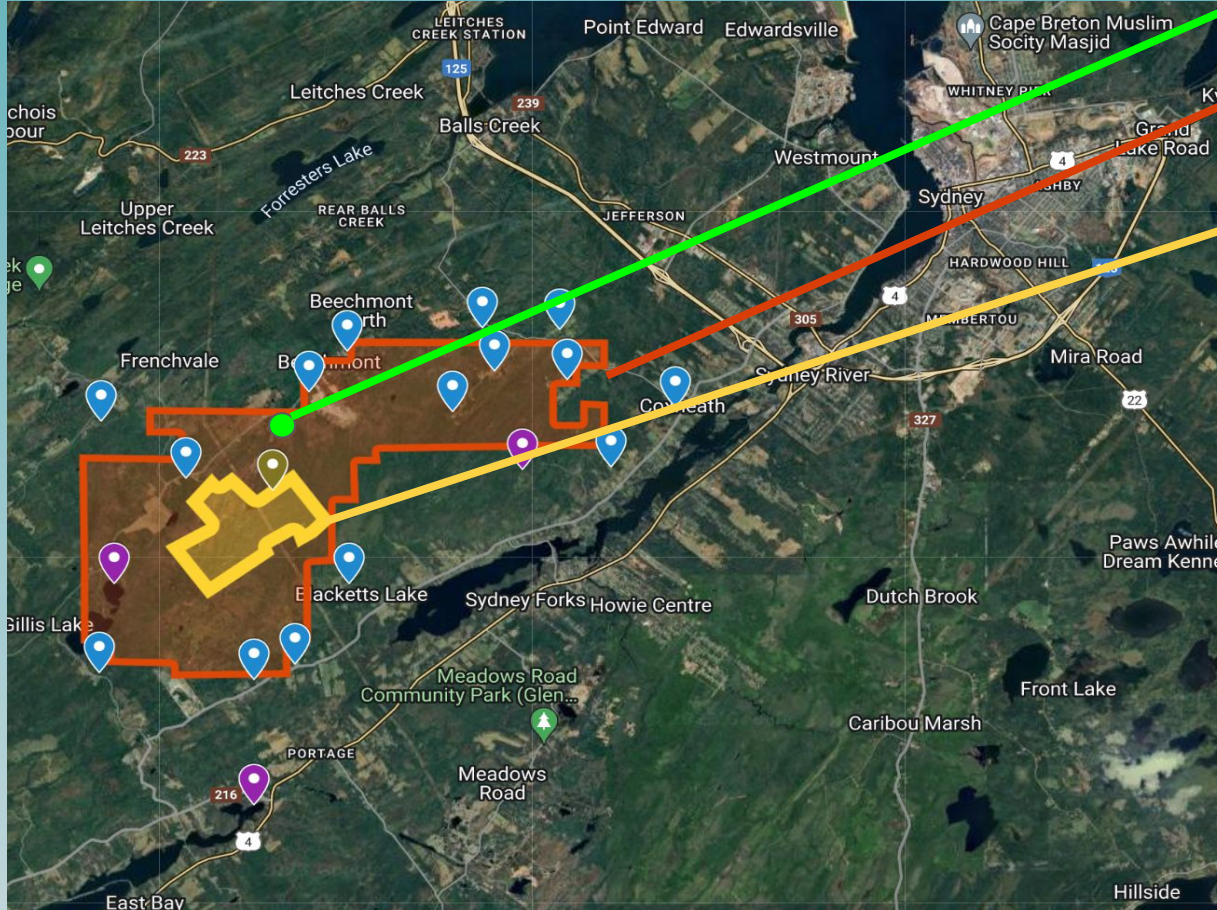
2003

Sources:

<https://www.mindat.org/loc-206381.html>

<http://nsminerals.atspace.com/Coxheath.html>

# Exploration and CBRM Land Areas



Original mine site  
< 1 sq km

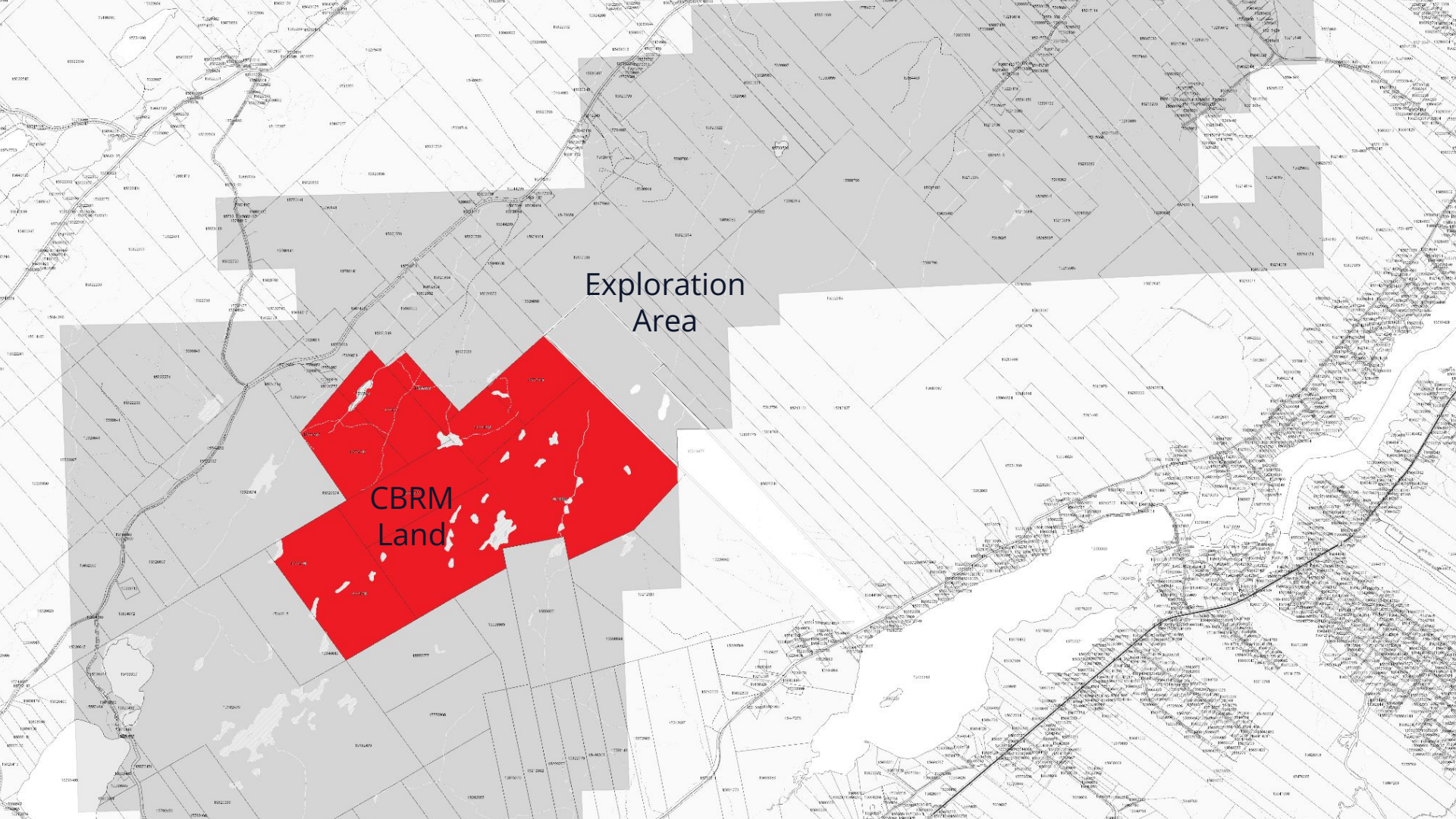
Nova Copper Proposed  
Exploration Area  
~ 30 sq km

CBRM's Beechmont PIDs  
~ 4 sq km

Largest strip-mine in NS  
~ 3 sq km, for reference:

(East Milford)  
<https://novascotia.ca/natr/meb/fieldtrip/stop3.asp>





Exploration  
Area

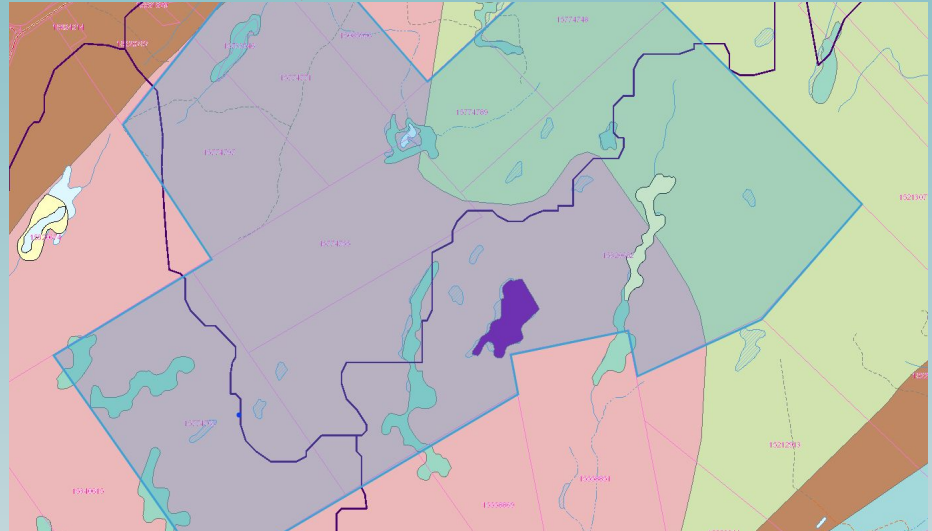
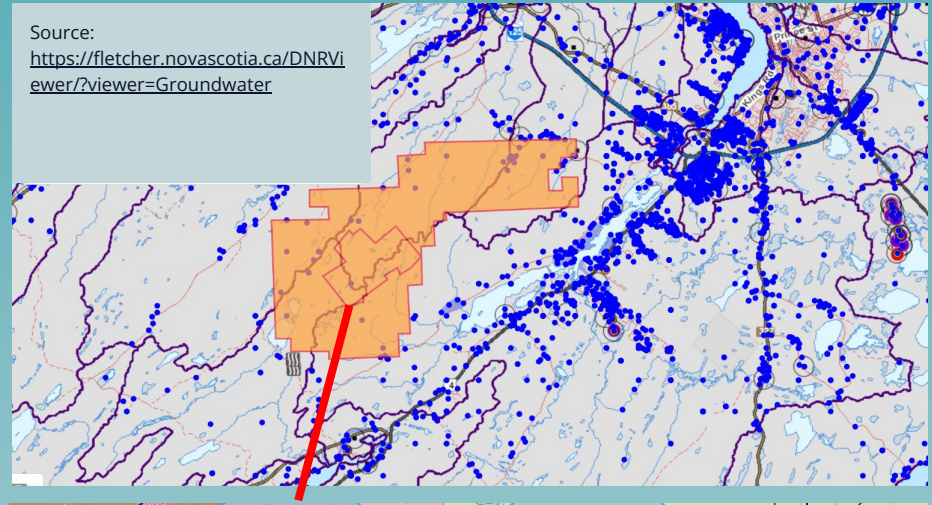
CBRM  
Land

Hundreds of residents with drilled wells (blue dots) as well as rivers and sensitive lakes. The Bras D'Or Lakes Biosphere is within 3 km of the exploration outline.

This data does not include hundreds of dug wells used by nearby residents.

The CBRM land and proposed mining areas are **on a hill** and directly located on **watersheds** (Sydney River, Mira, Gillis Brook) nearby to aquifers and other water sources.

Source:  
<https://fletcher.novascotia.ca/DNRViewer/?viewer=Groundwater>



# Open-pit mining and impacts

The proposed mine will be an open-pit (strip) mine.

Consequences of this type of mining include:

- Deforestation and land degradation
- Fractured bedrock (water table)
- Water, air and soil pollution
- Human health risks
- Depletion of local water sources
- Displacement of and risk to wildlife
- Infrastructure problems (e.g. damaged roads)
- Loss of nearby property values



# Tailings

All mining produces tailings: waste including substances such as arsenic, acids, asbestos-like fibers, metals, sulfides and radioactive content.

Tailings have traditionally been kept in ponds prone to leakage. Dry stacking (suggested by Nova Copper<sup>1</sup>) removes water through filtration and stores the waste material in piles.

Dry Stacking hazardous material only works well under ideal dry conditions. If conditions are not ideal (e.g. heavy rain), impacts become even more serious due to highly concentrated waste.<sup>2</sup>

Our area has one of the highest levels of precipitation in the country at 1500 mm per year.<sup>3</sup>



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> CBC Maritime Noon interview August 22, 2023  
<https://www.keepcoxheathclean.org/media/>

"Mining industry releases first standard to improve safety of waste storage". *Mongabay Environmental News*. 6 August 2020. Retrieved 16 April 2021.

<sup>2</sup> <https://tailings.info/disposal/drystack.htm>

<https://www.savetheboundarywaters.org/risks-human-health-sulfide-ore-copper-mining>

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/aps-v13-i2-c8.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sydney-nova-scotia.climatemps.com/>

# Endangered and at-risk species identified



Photo: Jefferson County Conservation

**Little brown bat**



Photo: iNaturalist

**Yellow lampmussel**



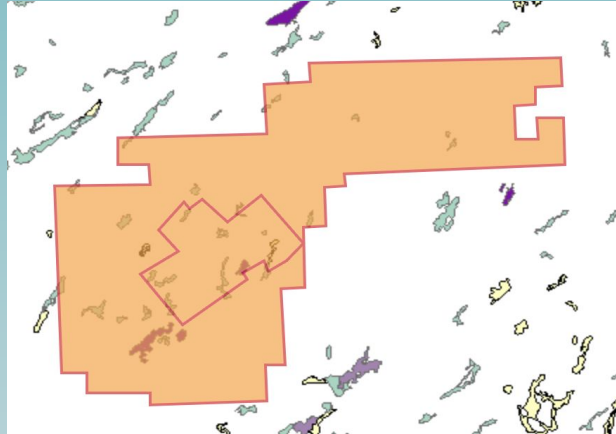
Photo: Atlantic Salmon Federation

**Atlantic salmon**



Photo: Nature Conservancy of Canada

**Canada lynx**



**Wetlands**

# Why is this important at the municipal level?

Mining regulations will not sufficiently protect the watersheds in the area

Levels of water-borne contaminants are **self-monitored by the mine**

Damage is to be handled in the form of reparations after the mine closes

Mines often enter an indefinite “care & maintenance phase” meaning that they are not officially closed and reparations are not required

The province has identified 68 sites it plans to assess and remediate. Two sites believed to be most contaminated will cost an estimated \$60+ million to remediate.

Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.6367300>



Photo by Kris Tynski  
Lower Gillis Lake Falls





Photo by Kris Tynski  
Coxheath Mountain

# Economic Concerns

Understanding the true cost

# The myth of economic growth from mining

Myth: mining will result in a windfall of tax revenue for all levels of government

Reality: mining companies can exploit loopholes to avoid paying taxes

Moose River mining company paid \$0 in taxes to any level of government from 2017-2019

The real winners are the private company, stakeholders and investors – not the local community or municipality



**Photo by Kris Tynski  
Beechmont**

Source:

<https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/economy/natural-resources/mining/atlantic-gold-paid-0-in-taxes-in-2019/>

# Myth of economic growth, cont'd

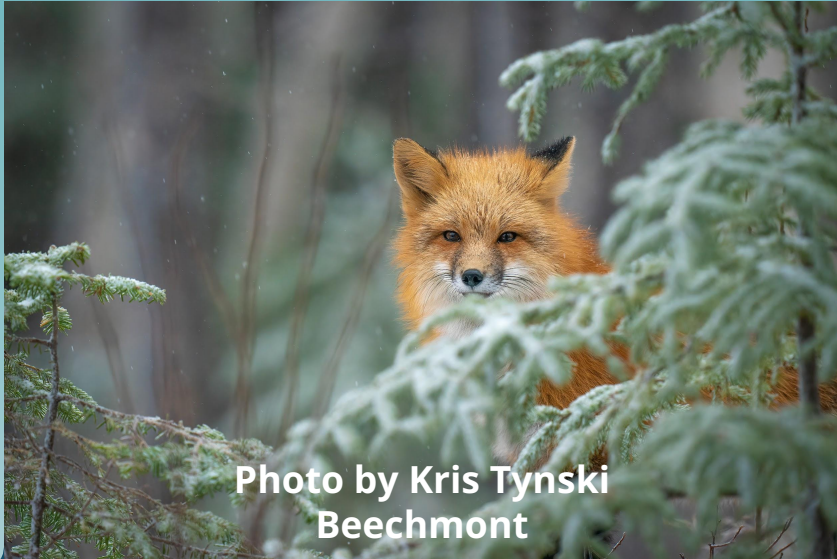


Photo by Kris Tynski  
Beechmont

Myth: mining will bring money into the local community.

Reality: an analysis of over 300 studies on the economic benefits of mining concluded that there is “no scientific basis for accepting the widespread obvious assumption that mining will lead to economic improvement.”



There is currently no protection available to citizens with well water until damage is already done. When taxpayers detect contaminated water in their private wells, there would be no recourse.

**Can the CBRM commit to immediately supplying municipal water to each Coxheath/Beechmont home at no cost?**



# Economic value of wildlands

Protected forests provide important ecosystem goods and services (“natural capital”), including: water filtration and purification, flood control, nutrient recycling, air filtration, pollination, and carbon storage.

The value of these services has been calculated to be worth **\$26,250 per hectare per year** in a recent study by TD Bank and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Protected lands also provide cultural, social, and recreational value.



Photo by Kris Tynski  
Gillis Lake



Photo by Kris Tynski  
Coxheath

# Alternative Options for Land Use



Photo by Kris Tynski  
Beechmont



Convey the land to First Nations for conservation and land-based education/training and traditional use

Convey the land to the Province for conservation

Open the purchase of land to private parties specifically for conservation (three distinct potential buyers have been identified)

# Albert Marshall

*Elder & Knowledge Keeper*

*Co-creator of Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing)*

“Mother Earth needs to be protected and cared for by all. As elected leaders, you have a responsibility to ensure that the possibility of ‘economic development’... does not come at the cost of a toxic legacy that lasts generations.”



“True reconciliation involves understanding and promoting the values of the Mi’kmaq People and protecting their interests. The proposed copper/metals mine does not fit with our beliefs or hopes for the future of Unama’ki.”



# Thank you Wela'liog

info@KeepCoxheathClean.org  
KeepCoxheathClean.org

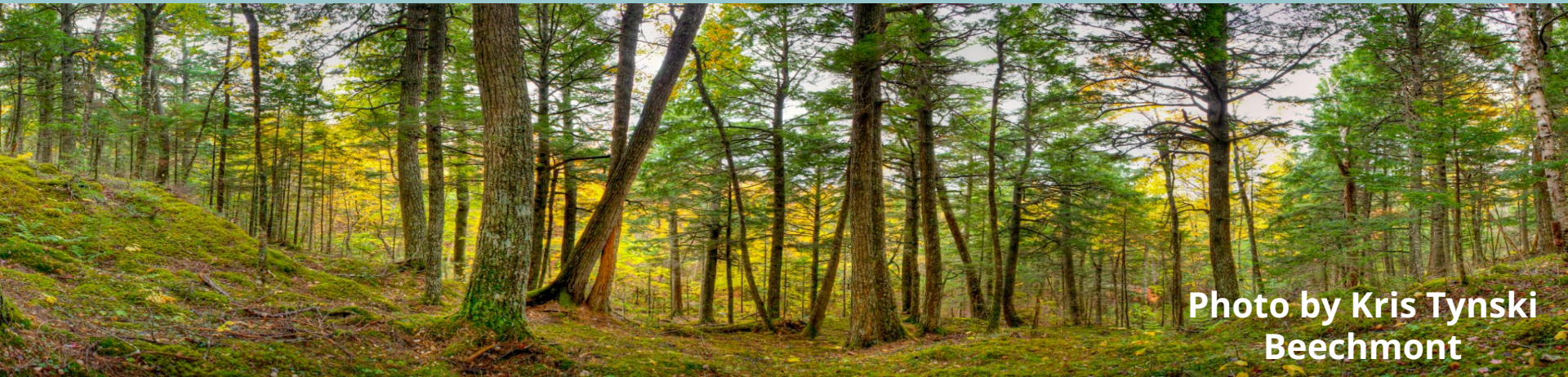


Photo by Kris Tynski  
Beechmont