

Restoration Of Thinkers' Lodge/Eaton Estate Underway

By John Eaton

The Cyrus Eaton Estate, normally quiet and serene under a blanket of snow this time of year, has been a beehive of activity this winter. Much needed stabilization and restoration work on Thinkers' Lodge began in earnest in November and will continue well into the spring.

I welcome this opportunity to bring residents of Pugwash and the surrounding area up to date about our progress on the first phase of our collaborative, phased, long term project to restore the Thinkers' Lodge historical site and the Cyrus Eaton Estate.



Working collaboratively. In 2008, Thinkers' Lodge was designated a National Historic Site and the Nova Scotia Department of Economic and Rural Development made a grant in support of restoring the Lodge. The Pugwash Park Commission and the Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association convened a steering committee that included local Cumberland and Pugwash citizens to make initial plans to stabilize and restore the Lodge. This group considered bid proposals from architect/planners and unanimously picked WHW Architects of Halifax to be the lead. In 2009, collaboration was expanded to include the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

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Working with the best. In late 2009, we finally began restoration. Through award winning WHW, our team was joined by Gary Hanley, who has considerable experience and expertise in restoring wooden structures including being the architect responsible for the restoration of St. George's Anglican Church in Halifax. Also new to the team is construction manager Ron Cahoon, who led the restoration of St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg after the fire in 2001 and was also directly involved in St. George's.

Working locally. An important objective of both the Eaton family and CREDA is to benefit the local community. To date 75% of the money allocated for construction has been spent in the Cumberland region. The foundation work is being done by McClearn's based out of Wallace while the custom roofing and much of the carpentry is being done by Rafe's Construction out of Parrsboro. Of course, we are using local materials whenever possible.

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