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Eaton grandson impressed with Thinkers Lodge work

National Historic Site receives facelift thanks to government funding

By **DARRELL COLE**
THE CITIZEN

PUGWASH — The grandson of Cyrus Eaton is pleased his father's legacy is being preserved through renovations to the historic summer cottage where the Pugwash Conferences got their beginning.

John Eaton visited the seaside Thinkers Lodge late last week to tour the site and see for himself the work that has already been completed to stabilize the historic property that has started to show its age.

"This is my first visit since the restoration started and I'm very impressed, especially with the work that's been done on the foundation and the roof," Eaton said. "It's going to be a solid foundation for what's going to be a wonderful project for the community and the region."

Funding for the project was received from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency with both the province and the Municipality of Cumberland providing funds as well.

When work crews arrived on the scene late last fall they found the basement in the lodge building in danger of caving in, while there was extensive water damage in the basement and in the top floors of the building from a leaky roof.

"We had a site assessment done in 2008 on the structural integrity of all the buildings," Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association executive director Rhonda Kelly said. "Certainly the priority building identified

from a historical perspective is the Thinkers Lodge."

Kelly said there were some serious concerns identified with the building's humidity, the state of repair, the foundation and the roof that needed to be replaced.

Site supervisor Rob Grant said work was immediately started to build up the foundation and put a new cement floor in the basement. At the same time, new timbers and beams were put under the main floor while the lodge's chimneys were replaced.

"We pretty much rebuilt the basement because there was a lot of water damage," said Grant. "We added a new slab and retaining walls and a lot of new beams."

Work also included replacing the decks overlooking Pugwash Harbour and the Northumberland Strait and putting new cedar shingles on the roof.

In the coming months, much of the work will focus on landscaping and cleaning the main lodge building up for a Women in Peace conference planned for this summer.

From there, Kelly expects an estimate will be done for the cost of completing mechanical improvements to the lodge as well as repairs to the other buildings on the property including the dining hall and the staff quarters.

The property was declared a national historic site in 2008. It was home to talks designated to limit the nuclear arms race, known as the Pugwash Conference and started in 1957.



CREDA board chair Gerald Read looks over renovations to the Thinker's Lodge in Pugwash with John Eaton, who is the grandson of Cyrus Eaton, while Cumberland-Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley MP Scott Armstrong and local municipal councillor Al Gillis. Restoration has included building two new decks, rebuilding the basement and a new cedar shingle roof for the historic seaside summer home that was the birthplace of the Pugwash Peace Movement and the Pugwash Conferences. Cole photo