



Community Profile

Communities in Bloom / Tidy Towns 2015



Town of Witless Bay

“Our way is not soft grass. It’s a mountain path with lots of rocks. But it goes upwards, forward, toward the sun.”

- Ruth Westheimer

A person with a red backpack is walking away from the camera on a rocky beach. They are wearing a grey and white patterned sweater and blue jeans. The beach is covered in dark, wet rocks and some seaweed. In the background, there is a grassy cliff with a few evergreen trees on top. The ocean is visible in the distance under a clear blue sky.

Just a stone's throw

from the easternmost point in North America is a small community with a funny name and a big heart for its diverse seabird population.

Located on the Avalon's Southern Shore, along the scenic Irish Loop, the Town of Witless Bay maintains a strong connection to its rural roots, traditions, and breathtaking surroundings.



Welcome to our corner of The Rock!

As one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the province, Witless Bay is continually attracting fresh talent, youthful energy, and new business. Located only a few kilometres from the provincial capital, our town is skirted by the world-renowned East Coast Trail and enhanced by an extensive network of community trails. Home to the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve and its puffin population, Witless Bay is a haven for hiking, fishing, sea kayaking, and bird and whale watching, among a long list of other pursuits enjoyed by tourists and residents alike.

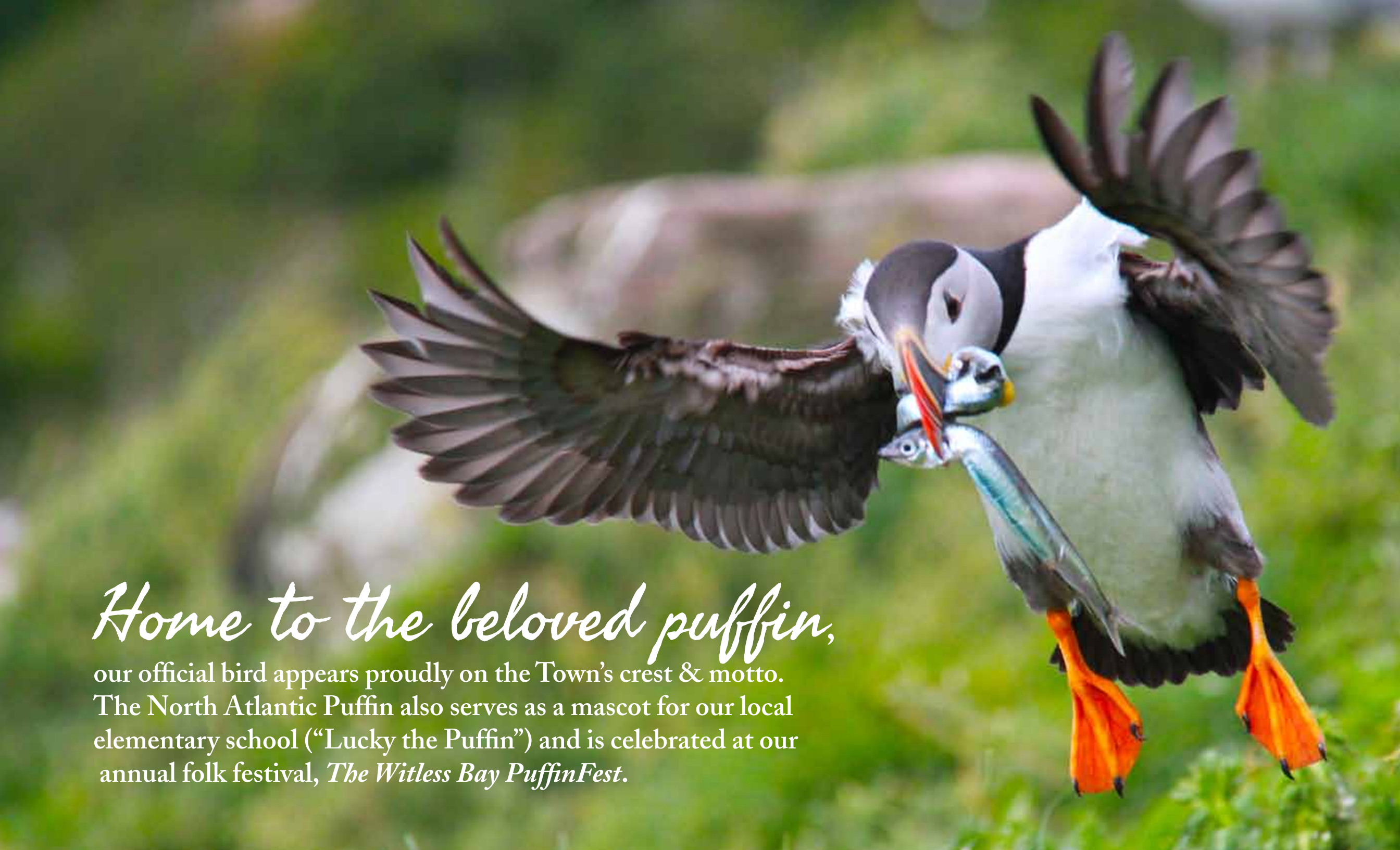
Championed by a dynamic Community Enhancement Committee, an engaged Town Council, and an ever-growing number of volunteers, the Town of Witless Bay was crowned in Newfoundland and Labrador's 2014 *Tidy Towns* competition despite being a new arrival. I am delighted that Witless Bay has been selected to participate in Communities in Bloom Canada's national competition, and I look forward to showcasing our beautiful community! It has been my honour and privilege to Chair the extraordinary team of enthusiastic volunteers that has led our community's efforts. The program has already made a big impact on our town, galvanizing many teams of volunteers. The effect of this hard work and dedication is clearly evident throughout Witless Bay - as Tennessee Williams once wrote,

the violets in the mountains have broken the rocks.

During your time in beautiful Witless Bay, I invite you to relax by the seaside, enjoy a conversation or two with the local residents, and get to know our Puffin Patrol. Visit our spectacular Ecological Reserve and its seabirds (including our beloved puffin!), enjoy a jiggs dinner, hike the world-famous East Coast Trail and our beautiful community trails, see the majestic humpback, and take the time to check out our Lower Pond, with its record-shattering trout!

We look forward to showcasing our community to you!

-Sébastien Després
Mayor, Town of Witless Bay



Home to the beloved puffin,

our official bird appears proudly on the Town's crest & motto.
The North Atlantic Puffin also serves as a mascot for our local
elementary school ("Lucky the Puffin") and is celebrated at our
annual folk festival, *The Witless Bay PuffinFest*.

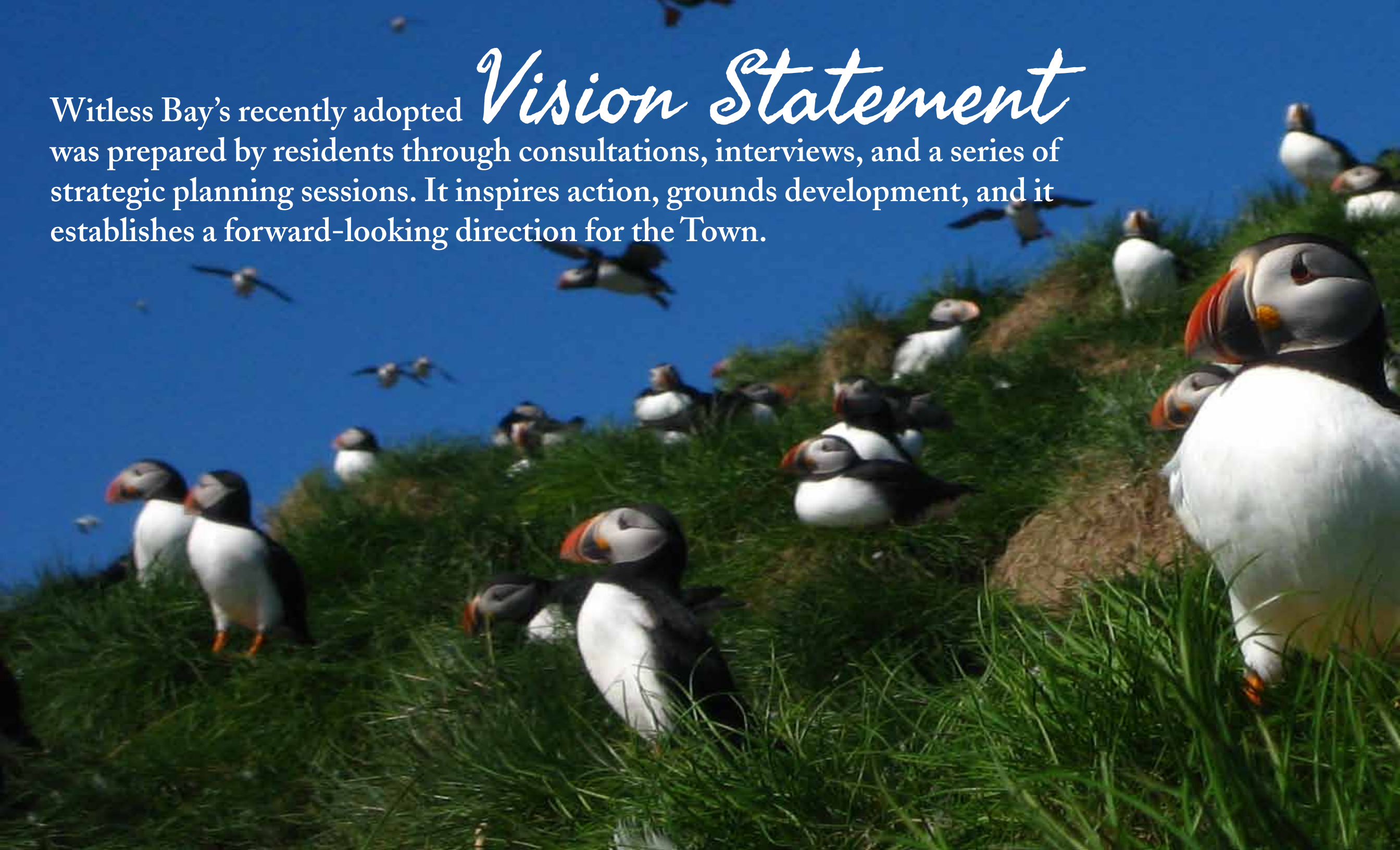


Our Seabird Sanctuary

“a rock which stretches into the vast sea and which, exposed to the fury of the winds and beaten against by the waves, endures all the violence.” -Virgil

The islands that make up our Ecological Reserve are home to North America's largest colony of Atlantic Puffins, with over 260,000 breeding pairs. The reserve is also home to the second largest colony of Leach's Storm Petrels in the world, with well over a million birds.

Witless Bay's recently adopted *Vision Statement* was prepared by residents through consultations, interviews, and a series of strategic planning sessions. It inspires action, grounds development, and it establishes a forward-looking direction for the Town.





*“We, the people of Witless Bay,
stand united as stewards
of rich natural, cultural, and heritage resources
to ensure our beautiful town’s continued vitality.
We are recognized for an authentic identity and
inviting character that makes our community a
great place in which to grow & prosper.”*

Composting

For the past two years, Council has partnered with Newfoundland and Labrador's Multi-Materials Stewardship Board to offer a compost bin purchasing program. One hundred composters have now been made available to our residents at a subsidized cost. To aid in the distribution and use of these bins, the Town council offers an annual MMSB training workshop on composting techniques.



Saving the Whales!

Recognized as one of the best places to observe whales in the world, Witless Bay attracts thousands of sightseers every year. While the vast majority of visitors are careful to comply with guidelines and regulations a number of incidents involving the harassment of humpback whales and seabirds prompted a local group to take action. To help people responsibly view the animals, residents of Witless Bay, in conjunction with the Newfoundland and Labrador branch of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-NL) are creating signs to remind boaters of the impact that humans can have on our seabird colonies and the whales and inform residents about what to do when they witness an animal potentially being harassed.



No Pesticides! No Herbicides!

The Town of Witless Bay does not use pesticides or herbicides of any kind in any of its maintenance work. Recognizing the vulnerability of our many ponds, rivers, streams, and their outlet, the sea, the Town has also banned the use of Tordon 101 inside its boundaries. Because this defoliating agent is harmful to aquatic organisms and causes long term adverse effects on aquatic environments, the Town has campaigned for a province-wide ban on the herbicide, encouraging the use of mechanical means instead.





Caring for our Pollinators

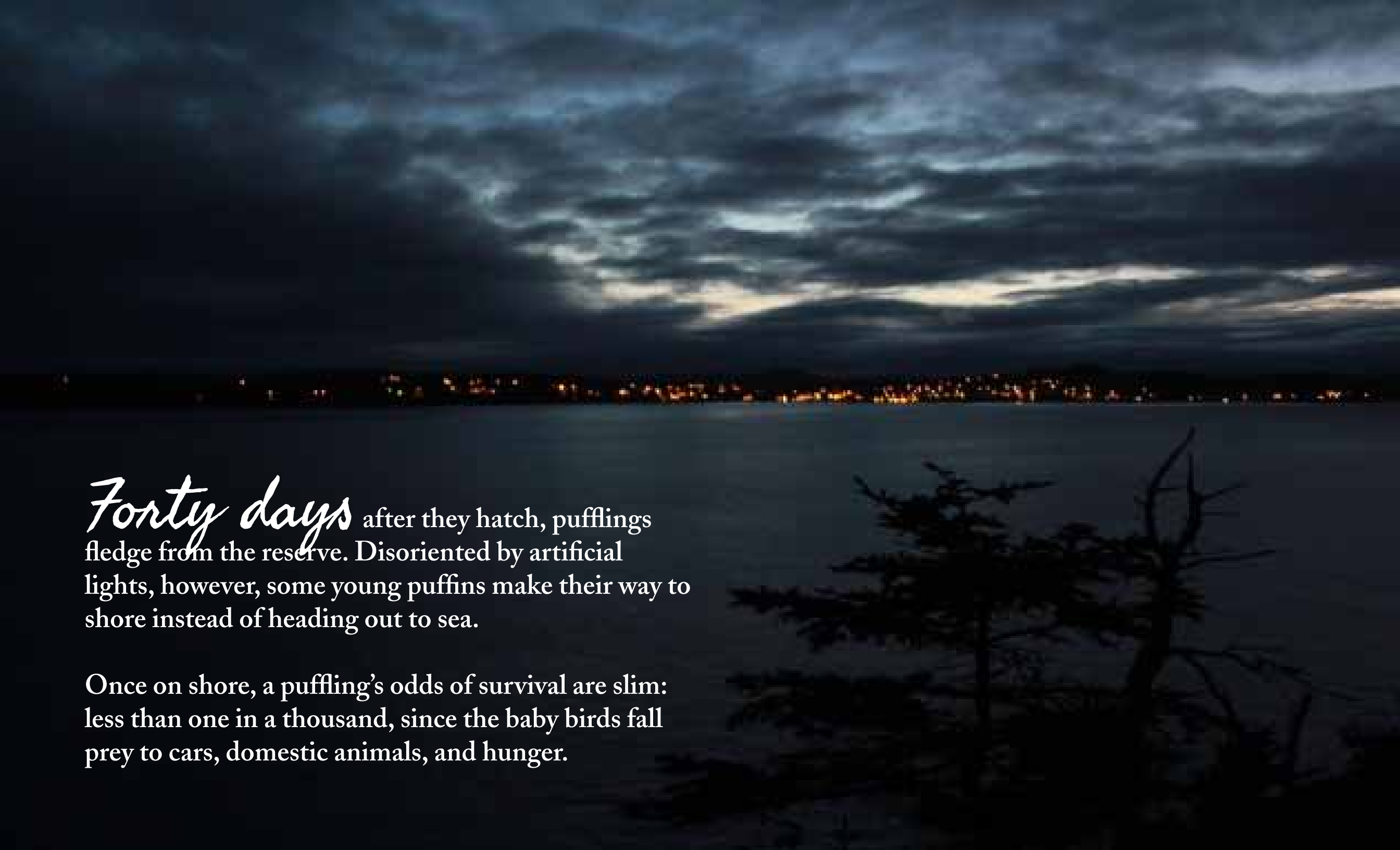
It is an exciting time to be a beekeeper in Newfoundland, as this is one of the last places on earth where the bees are free of various mites and other conditions which require the beekeeper to regularly douse the hive and bees with toxins. Our island has an abundance of wild flowers, shrubs, trees and berry bushes, all ideal for honeybees, toxin-free food aplenty.

Our honey is truly organic, since Newfoundland lacks an industrial agricultural sector, and is thus free of large-scale contamination from herbicides and pesticides. The Town of Witless Bay also does its part by avoiding the use of herbicides and pesticides in its maintenance work, and by banning defoliating agents. Our town is also actively encouraging people to compost and garden, and this leads to more forage materials for bees & other pollinators, and fosters appreciation for these valuable insects.

Witless Bay now has several beehives, set up by four families four years ago. We are experimenting with a less conventional type of hive called the top bar hive. It is a more natural way of keeping bees, in which they build their own combs, and are less disturbed by the beekeepers when they go into the hive for inspection or to gather honey. The winters here are long and uneven, which the bees seem to manage, but the spring can be quite late and cold, especially in coastal communities like Witless Bay, and is the most dangerous time for our bees. In addition to our honeybees, we have many bumblebees and other tiny wild pollinators. They all love the blueberry blossoms, forget-me-nots, cornflowers, dandelions, honeysuckle bushes and the myriad of blooming plants with which we are blessed.

A province-wide bee organization has just been set up. There is a growing awareness that we have something unique here, which needs protection and which could potentially be an industry worth developing, namely that of providing queens and bees to beleaguered beekeepers elsewhere, let alone the export of fine honey.

As the buzz around bees continues to grow, Witless Bay's vibrant honeybee population will hopefully grow as well, as people learn to appreciate their value in pollinating our cherry, plum and apple trees, and all of our precious berry patches. The rest of the world, suffering from the catastrophic collapse of bee colonies, may well come to Newfoundland, looking for our healthy bees and their pure honey.



Forty days after they hatch, pufflings fledge from the reserve. Disoriented by artificial lights, however, some young puffins make their way to shore instead of heading out to sea.


Once on shore, a puffling's odds of survival are slim: less than one in a thousand, since the baby birds fall prey to cars, domestic animals, and hunger.

To diminish the number of pufflings who become disoriented by artificial lighting, Witless Bay observes what has playfully been dubbed:

“Puffin Savings Time”

The Puffin Savings Time slogan, “Don’t make the light very bright,” reminds residents and business owners to dim or turn off all unnecessary lights. Happily, many businesses in the area have even accepted to turn off their lit signage during this time.



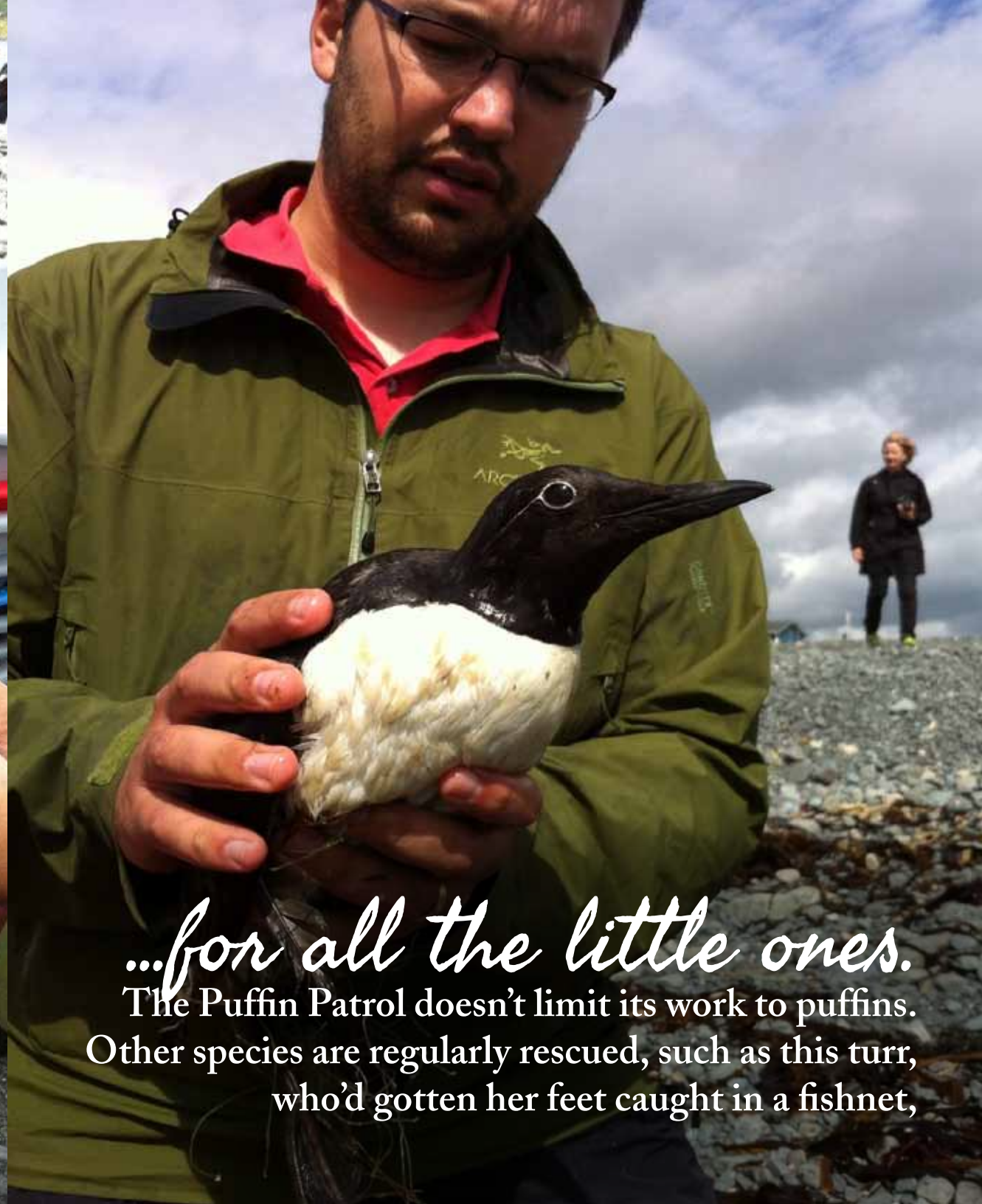
A puffin is shown in flight, facing left. It has a dark grey back and wings, a white underbelly, and a distinctive red beak. Its large, orange webbed feet are visible behind it. The background is a dark, textured blue with numerous out-of-focus white and light blue circular bokeh lights, creating a dreamy, ethereal atmosphere.

The Witless Bay Puffin Patrol rescues stranded puffin chicks by patrolling the area every evening during fledging season. Kept secure overnight, the pufflings are banded by Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service, and safely returned to the ocean the next morning. Working in partnership with CPAWS-NL's Seabird Conservation and Habitat Improvement Program, the Patrol's many young volunteers have rescued thousands of birds.



The duty to care...

for our environment is one of the many things our Puffin Patrol helps teach even our youngest residents.



...for all the little ones.

The Puffin Patrol doesn't limit its work to puffins. Other species are regularly rescued, such as this turrel, who'd gotten her feet caught in a fishnet,

Tidy Town Hour Car Wrecks

During the month of July (branded as Witless Bay's "Community Spirit Month"), residents are invited to show their pride in our town during the weekly Tidy Town Hour. At 6:00pm every Wednesday, residents join their friends, family & neighbours in a weekly neighbourhood cleanup, picking up trash, sprucing up their properties, planting flowers, building planters, pulling out weeds, helping business owners tend to their flowers, tending to town-owned grounds, etc.

Recognizing that car wrecks are a detriment to towns' attractiveness, Council identified a solution to the problem, inviting towing operators to pitch in to help clean up the town. Their services are advertised during the month of May (which is branded as "Community Clean-up Month"). The end result has been very satisfying, with the vast majority of properties cleaned up throughout the town.



Town Volunteering Day

This August, our Community Enhancement Committee is organizing our first annual "Witless Bay Community Volunteering Day." Together, we will spend the day tackling a large-scale project requiring many hands!

The Mayor's Hike

Towns all across Newfoundland and Labrador participate in the Heart & Stroke Foundation's annual fundraising initiative, the Mayor's Walk. This event takes on a unique flavour in Witless Bay: In order to highlight our town's ecological mission, the Mayor's *Walk* becomes the Mayor's *Hike*, with participants walking up the beautiful Upper Pond Trail. Despite the mauzy weather and the rain in the forecast, the 2015 Mayor's Hike for Heart and Stroke attracted over thirty participants, who, after the hike, gathered at the Mayor's home for a heart-healthy indoor picnic!



Adopt-a-Spot

Participants in our brand new Adopt-A-Spot program help maintain our Town's natural beauty by "adopting" and caring for an area of their choice (a stretch of coastline, a trail, the banks of a river, a public space, or a street). Witless Bay's residents, families associations and businesses have all been invited to participate! Once a spot is adopted, a sign is placed at the site, officially identifying the spot as having been adopted, and it's completely up to the adopters to decide how they will care for their spot.

The forty-two following groups have signed up since the program was first launched in May 2015:


- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Shamrock Pottery | 22. Bonnie, Phil, Mae & Kate |
| 2. JLM Carter | 23. The Lundrigans |
| 3. The Doyles | 24. Josh Ivany |
| 4. The Byrne Family | 25. The Meadus Family |
| 5. Kelly Houlihan | 26. Tanya, Caroline, Kathleen & James |
| 6. Randy Ivany | 27. Margie Lundrigan |
| 7. The White Family | 28. The Wiseman/Carey Family |
| 8. Sharon & Sheila | 29. The Irish Loop Coffee House |
| 9. Justina & Baasil | 30. Witless Bay Ecotours |
| 10. Audrey, Bridget, Gabriel & Charlotte | 31. Maureen & Catherine |
| 11. The Crofts | 32. The Murphys |
| 12. The Sullivans | 33. Elaine's B&B |
| 13. The Golden Girls | 34. The Estrada & O'Driscoll Families |
| 14. Roxanne, Brian & Aislin | 35. Neighbourhood families |
| 15. The Cahill/Chafe Family | 36. The Tulks |
| 16. Witless Bay Heritage Committee | 37. The Putt Family |
| 17. Witless Bay Home Hardware | 38. Shirley Aylward & Tyler Hiscock |
| 18. The Després/Wright Family | 39. Dawson Murphy |
| 19. Sheila Carew | 40. The Vickers & O'Briens |
| 20. Liam, Anna & Patrick | 41. Hilda Carter |
| 21. Rosalind Carey | 42. The Hutchings Family |



To kill save two birds with one stone,

we demonstrated the impact of pollution on the nearby bird sanctuary and raised awareness about the important responsibility we have towards the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve by transforming the 5632lbs of garbage we collected in 2014 into the biggest puffin ever made out of garbage.





Leaving no stone unturned.

64 volunteers joined Council, the Kinsmen, and our Community Enhancement Committee to make the 2015 Community Cleanup a fantastic success again this year, with 170 bags collected!

Sponsored by the Witless Bay Kinsmen, Tim Horton's, the local Home Hardware, the Knights of Columbus, and the town council, a tidy town is bound to put a smile on everyone's face.

Community Involvement

The Witless Bay Regional Fire Department

The Witless Bay Regional Fire Department serves the area encompassing the Towns of Bay Bulls, Witless Bay, and the local service districts of Mobile, Tors Cove, Burnt Cove, Bauline and St. Michael's. The membership of the Fire Department is strong, and volunteer fire fighters attend biweekly training at the Fire Hall as well as special training sessions on a regular basis. The annual Firemen's Ball is a favourite event in the region, where residents of our surrounding communities come together to celebrate the work of the Fire Department.

Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish

The parish church is well attended every week, and the parish is served by a good number of active volunteers, including the members of the cemetery beautification committee, the parish finance committee, the pastoral committee, the St. Patrick's Church Choir, and teams of volunteers offering Sunday School, sacrament preparation classes, and a host of other services for the community.

Family Resource Centre

The local Family Resource Centre provides dozens of programs to serve the families of our region. *Drop-in playgroups* allow parents, caregivers, and young children to come together in an unstructured environment to play together & meet new friends. *Parent-Child Programs* provide a variety of activities that parents and/or caregivers and children can enjoy together. The Centre has a *Toy Lending Library*, a *Parent Resource Library*, a "Book Buddies" program, a *Home Play Program*, a *Clothing Exchange*, and a *Car Seat Safety Check* program.



A member of the
O'Connor Club
teaching a boy
how to knit during
Winter Carnival.



An Open & Accountable Town Council

The Public Meetings of our Town Council are not only open to the public; they are also set up to allow citizen participation. Input from residents is an important part of Council's decision-making. Individual residents and groups can make presentations during public meetings, and are often given the opportunity speak before a vote is made on an issue. A public comment session follows the public meetings, where residents can discuss with Council more informally. Members of Council are active in representing the Town and the interests of residents on a long list of committees, including the NEAR Plan Oversight Committee and Working Group, NAACAP, the North East Avalon Joint Councils Committee, the Southern Shore Joint Councils Committee, and the Bay Bulls to Bauline Athletic Association. To further engage with residents, the Town publishes bimonthly newsletters, and Mayor Sébastien Després informally hosts a Website (www.SebastienDespres.ca) and a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/sebastiendespres.page) to keep residents informed about Council's work.

The O'Connor 50+ Club

The O'Connor 50+ Club provides a social outlet for seniors, who look forward to the daily and weekly socials and love getting out and enjoying the fellowship of other seniors in the area. The comfortable and safe atmosphere encourage those who are lonely and isolated to come out and enjoy life! Now boasting well over 100 members, its membership is still growing strong. The schedule of weekly, monthly, and annual activities offered to the seniors of Witless Bay and surrounding area by the O'Connor 50+ Club is extensive, with programs to suit seniors of all ages: daily exercise classes, weekly crafts nights and card nights, and a very popular dart league. Craft Night may consist of any number of activities, often including sewing, quilting, knitting, rug hooking, scrap booking, art classes, helping out with some Guiding activities, or helping with activities at Mobile Central High School. Annual activities are also well-attended, and include the Christmas Dinner & Dance, the Spring Dinner & Dance, and others, such as bowling night, the Lunch and Learn series, movie night, and a dinner theatre. The Club also hosts socials with other clubs, which they visit on a regular basis, and support the activities of the area's other service groups.



The Mobile 2007 Royal Canadian Army Cadets

Aiming to promote good citizenship, leadership and physical fitness, our cadets are active members of our community, and they participate in many of our activities. Partnering with the Witless Bay Kinsmen Club, for instance, the cadets march in our annual Santa Claus Parade; in turn, the Kinsmen help with their ongoing fund-raising activities. The Mobile 2007 RCACC also partners with the Knights Columbus in raising money for their Christmas Hampers, managing to raise significant sums every year. The cadets also help with our annual regional Remembrance Day parade.



Girl Guides

Our girl guide movement is amongst the most active in the entire country (including Pathfinders, Rangers, Guides, Brownies & Sparks). The girls are very active in our communities, participating in service groups' various endeavours and lending a hand whenever possible.

Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus, Dean Patrick Cleary Council #6672, Witless Bay is a Fraternal organization. It was founded in 1975 by Dennis Power, the first Grand Knight, and is dedicated to providing programs & assistance to members of our communities along the Southern Shore. Strongly entrenched in the community, it provides a weekly bingo, seniors & children's programs, as well as community & church related activities. It also provides donations to various charities.

Kinsmen

Our Kinsmen have a big impact on our Town. Organizers of the annual Puffin-Fest, Santa Claus Parade, and our annual Community Cleanup, the Kinsmen also actively participate in a number of our other service clubs' activities.

Our Annual Events:

A mere sampling of what's on offer!



Winter Carnival

With its snow sculpture contest, a skating party, a sweetheart dance, sledding, fireworks, heritage craft workshops, our Winter Carnival a family favourite. The event is organized by the BBAA and funded in part by the Towns of Witless Bay and Bay Bulls.

The Witless Bay Santa Claus Parade

A staple offering in the town for well over three decades! With themed floats constructed by families, businesses, and the town's many service groups, the parade is always well-attended, rain or shine! Organized by the Witless Bay Kinsmen, the parade is partly funded by the Town of Witless Bay

The Seniors' Outreach Dinner

An annual event financed by the Town of Witless Bay and the Town of Bay Bulls and organized by the BBAA aiming to connect seniors with each other, with the service groups and associations who cater to their needs, and with their elected representatives at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

The Witless Bay Puffin Festival

A two-day event held on the first weekend of August. Organized by the Witless Bay Kinsmen with the assistance of the Town of Witless Bay, the festival kicks off with a very popular outdoor dance, which is followed by a Folk Festival & Children's Afternoon, featuring a long list of great local performers, children's entertainment, and booths by local service clubs, committees, and local businesses.

The Fall Fair

Another important event, attracting thousands from all around the region. Organized by the Irish Loop Chamber of Commerce as part of its *Shop Local* campaign, the fair promotes the crafts made and promoted by local craftspeople.

The Halloween Wonderland Theatre Food Drive

Another popular event in Witless Bay. Equipped with the costumes that earned five first-Prize wins of the biggest costume contest in the province, the town's music studio transforms itself annually into a Halloween Wonderland, where a cast of fifty entertains the courageous and foolhardy in exchange for non-perishables for the Knights of Columbus' Christmas food drive.



Sports

are very important in the region, with a full suite of sports programs offered in the region, each of which is well attended: martial arts, family skating, ice hockey leagues, power skating, a ball hockey league, a competitive cheer team, a number of basketball leagues, a summer swimming program, a variety of exercise programs, and a list of summer programs for kids. Out of a regional population of 4000, over 300 youth join the Southern Shore Crush Softball league.



The BBBA

The Bay Bulls to Bauline Athletic Association provides quality recreation infrastructure and sport, leisure and wellness programs for the seven surrounding communities. Financed by the towns of Witless Bay & Bay Bulls, the BBBA organizes a great number of the activities and sports in our region, including the annual regional Winter Carnival and Regional Games, a full-time afterschool program, and a suite of summer youth programs (Day Camp, teen programs, sports camps, soccer program, etc.). In the past five years, the Association has repaired two ball fields, built three new playgrounds, three multi-purpose courts, a skate park, and a lifestyle center serving the region. The BBBA's vision: A vibrant, integrated community that values an active lifestyle for residents of all ages!





Our cheer team, the Mobile Monarchs, won both the provincial & the national championships at Niagara Falls this year!



Heritage Conservation

Heritage Properties

The Heritage Committee has worked in cooperation with Council to protect, restore, and design a number of heritage properties in the town. For instance, with the closing and sale of the large Presentation Sisters' convent, many residents expressed concern for the future of the building. The Heritage Committee worked with the new owner to ensure that the heritage aspects of the structure be maintained. The Committee held several meetings with the owners, working productively to help ensure that the building is protected. Today the convent is in the process of being completely restored, and has been designated as a Provincial Heritage Site.

Our Parish Church

For the past four years, the community's music studio has offered two recital series of five concerts each (the Wright Music Studio's "Summer Jams" and "Holiday Lights" recital series). Admission to the concerts is by donation, with all proceeds going to the maintenance fund of our historically important and much-loved parish church.

Heritage Inventory

In 2011, the town's Heritage Committee published the *Heritage Inventory of Witless Bay: An Inventory Report of Pre-1930's Structures in Witless Bay, NL*. Highlighting sixty-eight houses in the community, this publication uses the provincial Heritage Foundation forms, accompanied by photographs. A number of structures with a traditional or distinctive architectural style are identified as having particular historic or aesthetic value and as having great potential as tourist attractions, thus making their protection as historically valuable assets and tourist attractions achievable.



Salt-Swept Saltboxes
are the Town's signature
architectural feature.

Protecting our Heritage Trails

The Heritage Committee has been assisting Council in the preservation of the community's internal trail systems by compiling a complete list of historical trails, lane-ways, and cart paths. Making use of information obtained through their interviews with seniors, the Heritage Committee has worked with Council to protect these trails against encroachment and to help ensure access is available.

Our Conservation Group Our Heritage Committee

Founded in 2007, the Witless Bay Conservation Group strives to protect, preserve and enhance the area's trout and salmon stocks for today and for future generations through promotion of education, scientific study and public awareness. The group received the 2008 Guenter Behr Atlantic Salmon Conservation Award, sponsored by the Salmonid Association of Eastern NL.

Founded in 2004, at a time when the preservation of the community's cultural heritage was primarily addressed as an afterthought to the lament of "My, what a shame," this committee is an official arm of the Witless Bay Town Council as one of its Residents' Advisory Committees. The Committee's mandate is to promote, preserve, conserve, and celebrate the natural heritage, the built heritage, and the cultural heritage of the town and its people. This Committee has spearheaded a number of important projects to document and preserve local heritage in all forms.



Folklore Methods Field School

Our Town Council and Heritage Committee hosted Memorial University's Department of Folklore graduate student field school in September 2014. These Masters and Ph.D. students spent three weeks in Witless Bay, recording our town's traditions and customs, and learning about ethnographic documentation techniques from leading North American specialists. During their stay in our town, the graduate students also documented a number of other intangible traditions in Witless Bay. This field school uses architecture as the entrée into local life, with the students recording fourteen buildings in the community, which are documented with scale floor plans and a text relating to their history. Recorded interviews with the owners and users of these structures also inform the beautifully detailed booklet that was published on this occasion.

“Rocks are records of events that took place at the time they formed. They're books. They have a different vocabulary, a different alphabet, but you learn how to read them.”

- John McPhee

Ed Chappel, of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, inspects the attic of one of the Town's oldest structures for details on its age and craftsmanship.





Folk Dancing Folklorists

Over one hundred residents came to meet the folklore students at our “Scuff and a Scoff” meet-and-greet. Our 50+ Club taught the students some local dances, and residents provided the live music and enough food to feed the masses!

Photo by Andrew



Community Mapping Initiative

When tourists and visitors make their way to Witless Bay, it's important for them to be able to get an idea of what they can do here so that they stay a while and take advantage of all that our Town has to offer. One key way of doing this is to offer them a "top 10 list of things to do here! The Community Enhancement Committee has been working on a community mapping project these past months, to replace the map that's currently on our Town brochures. We are also aiming to produce a larger print of this community map for the visitor centres and to offer as keepsakes.

Interpretative Storyboards

With the help of local artists and businesses, the Heritage Committee designed and installed a number of storyboards throughout the community, in popular locations where community members and visitors gather or stop to rest. These storyboards highlight the Town's environmental awareness and detail responsible environmental and conservation management practices

Interviewing Seniors

The Heritage Committee has recently begun conducting interviews with residents about past community events and ways of life. These interviews explore seniors' recollections of folkways, and ways in which they interacted with the environment. The Heritage Committee has so far completed two dozen interviews with local seniors. These recordings are transcribed and entered into an electronic file. Stories from these interviews will be edited and published, together with historical photos.

Our Cancellation Stamp

Highlighting the Town's special responsibility towards the environment, the Witless Bay Heritage Committee worked in conjunction with Canada Post to create a cancellation stamp representing the Ecological Reserve. The stamp details a puffin (also the Town's logo) proudly resting above the reserve.

Heritage Graveyard

Some of the stone markers in our old cemetery are from the late 1700s, when permanent settlement in the area first began. Many of the founding families of the community are buried here, and many of the Irish names on the headstones are still common in Witless Bay today! Under the direction of the Heritage Committee, a crew was hired through a government-sponsored support project and cleanup of the town's old seaside graveyard was undertaken. In addition to cleaning up the graveyard, the Committee repaired the fences, restored and secured the headstones, improved the landscape, refurbished the old access path and designed interpretative signage. This process raised awareness of the site and both residents and tourists can now more readily visit the area. The Witless Bay Heritage Committee worked in conjunction with a provincial archaeologist and the director of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, and succeeded in having the site recognized as an official archaeological site (it has been assigned the Borden # ChAe-14). The Town has also declared this graveyard as a Municipal Heritage Site.

Cemetery Committee

Formed in 1994, the Cemetery Committee plans and carries out the work that is required to maintain the cemetery in good shape: fencing, paving, clearing land, moving grass and general upkeep. The committee also meets with families when necessary concerning burial arrangements. An annual cemetery fee is collected, a financial statement and letter is sent out annually to residents and a cemetery mass is celebrated every July. The committee's objective is to keep our cemetery a respectable resting place for deceased loved ones.



Landscapes, Trees & Flowers

The proposed Municipal Plan highlights the importance of

the preservation of trees.

It requires the preservation and/or replacement of mature trees wherever development takes place.



Tourism & Business Growth & Renewal Strategy 2015-2020

In February 2015, Council adopted the town's new *Tourism & Business Growth & Renewal Strategy 2015-2020*. This expansive document focuses on the fifty concrete actions that the Town and its residents can undertake together over the next 5 years – actions that if realized, will help the community meet its vision for the future. This document will help diversify our local economy and create a more stable commercial tax base by guiding Council in the coming years, establishing clear goals and actions to be followed so that we can continue to make Witless Bay an even better place in which to grow and prosper. These actions include planning, accountability, stewardship, engagement, partnership, tourism and business development. Our goal is to build a better future for Witless Bay with a focus on our natural environment and unique cultural heritage while growing our existing businesses and other potential industries.

Describing what they wish Witless Bay would be like in the year 2030, residents painted a picture of a town that looks a lot like the place we know and love today: a beautiful community with rural charm, a rich heritage, and rugged natural beauty. For this reason, the Town will strive to encourage residents to highlight these dimensions on their own properties and on Town-owned grounds. Many residents, families, community groups, service organizations have already joined the effort!



Our Official Flower

Following a consultation process with community members through our Community Enhancement Committee, the Town adopted the orange daylily as Witless Bay's official flower in 2014. This flower first arrived in Newfoundland gardens with early European settlers, and has survived in many of the community's gardens long after their original owners – and in some cases, even their houses. This flower is one of the original daylilies from which about 13,000 cultivars have been developed. Its orange and yellow blooms are two of the colours in our Town palette, and are reminiscent of the puffin.

A heritage plant that has been growing in Witless Bay gardens for generations, this lily grows into a patch that's easy to divide and share, as has been done for hundreds of years. The aim is to eventually have the Witless Bay Orange Daylily growing in every garden, business property, and public outdoor space in Witless Bay. The starter stock was discovered by members of our Community Enhancement Committee in one of town's vacant gardens. With the kind permission of the owner, the Committee has now replanted nearly 300 of the 400 available plants, and distributed these to residents free of charge. Witless Bay's St. Bernard's Elementary School has accepted to plant a stock in its community garden, so that the Town will have a reliable source from which to draw cuttings in the future.

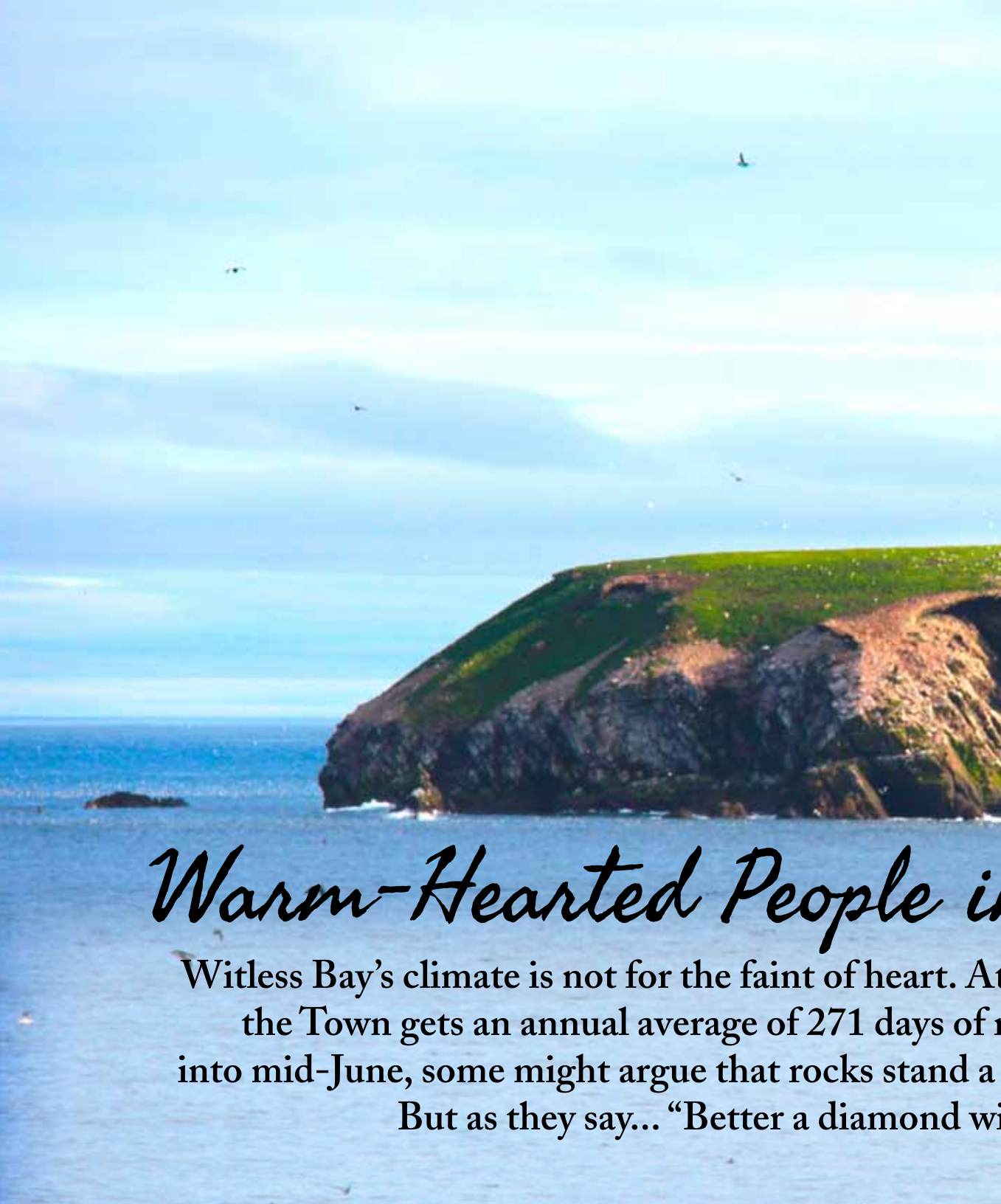




Garden Landscaping Training

The Town will be offering free workshops to residents on garden landscaping for their properties. These workshops will focus on topics such as small garden design, choosing the proper plant material for a coastal environment, and appropriate and alternative groundcovers.





Warm-Hearted People in a Stone-Cold Climate

Witless Bay's climate is not for the faint of heart. At the mercy of the cold wind-swept North Atlantic, the Town gets an annual average of 271 days of rain, drizzle, and fog. With frost warnings well into mid-June, some might argue that rocks stand a much better chance at making it here than flowers.

But as they say... "Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without one!"

Made up of bogs, barrens & rock outcrops,
Witless Bay's soils are coarse, stony, and acidic.
This doesn't mean we can't garden. It means we
have to focus on what grows well here.





Saint-Exupery once wrote,
"A pile of rocks ceases to be rocks when somebody contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral in mind."
Thousands upon thousands of rocks, stones, pebbles, and boulders are "planted" in artful ways throughout our community. Used as sculptures, mazes, labyrinths, walls, chimneys, fences, monoliths, grave markers, and building materials, what to some might have first been stumbling blocks come to be stepping stones.





What are men, to rocks and mountains?
-Jane Eyre



Town Regulations

safeguard Witless Bay's traditional rural roots and are tailored to meet the needs of residents' rural way of life while also ensuring a peaceful coexistence with a modern urban lifestyle.





Who ever said
clotheslines were just for clothes?
When the food fishery is open,
many residents ensure that their
stock of salted cod lasts the winter.





Sticks & Stones

generally get a bad rap, but here, they complement each other beautifully.

While they have all but disappeared in most Newfoundland and Labrador communities, traditional riddle fences and wattle fences are an important part of many of our community's gardens. Built with the leftovers from forest thinning operations, they are free to make (given the time!) and last for many decades.





*"She is mine own,
And I as rich in having such a jewel,
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
the water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.*

*-Valentine, in Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona**

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