

# Biodiversity Dilemmas

## Dilemma Two: Road to the Future

Plans are underway to build a new road through a stretch of land on the Northern Peninsula that will eventually see the development of a new subdivision.

A local wildlife biologist has just issued a report that there is a small population of two rare plant species growing on a portion of the proposed site.

Only three populations of the Long's braya and 11 populations of the Fernald's braya exist on the Northern Peninsula, which is the only place in the world where the two plants grow. The braya, being native to the island, is part of the province's natural history and needs to be protected.

Some people are upset that road construction may continue to go ahead, and suggestions have been made to build the road around the plants or outside of the plant boundary. Other people are upset that plans may be changed because of a handful of plants, and suggestions have been made to move the plants to another location.

This, however, may cause some irreversible damage to the habitat since the plants only grow under certain soil conditions. As members of the planning committee, what do you think should happen?

You may wish to begin your research by reviewing the Guide to the Environmental Protection Act through from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Environment and Conservation pages.

### Answer the following questions:

1. Who is potentially affected by this dilemma? How?
2. What do you think your committee would gain by saving the plants?
3. What else do you need to know in order to make the decision about whether or not you agree with the plans to construct a road on this site?
4. How do you think people might feel if the site was primary habitat for endangered animals rather than habitat for rare plants?
5. Construct a map showing the features of the area and the location of the proposed road.
6. What recommendations could your committee propose?
7. From the information you know or have learned so far, create a brochure to inform people in the area about the issue. Your group may wish to present this brochure as a way to gather support for your decision or generate more informed debate about the issue.
8. Share your recommendations with the class.

