



## **Friends of The Cornwallis River**

# **Cornwallis River Riparian Management Project**

**Final Report - June 2003**

### **River Setback Programs**

#### **Livestock Fencing Program**

The livestock fencing program in Kings County is a cooperative venture between the Nova Scotia department of Natural Resources (DNR), Nova Scotia Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (NS-EHJV) Riparian Management Project and Friends of the Cornwallis River Society (FOCRS). The objective of this program is to restrict the access of livestock to stream side habitats, in order to reduce degradation of river banks and improve water quality; by reducing sedimentation and inputs of point sources of contamination.

The livestock fencing program involves a minimum 5 meter set-back for restrictive fencing. The program will pay up to 40% (5,000 maximum) of the initial cost of erection of the fence, associated materials and labor, and is primarily concerned with creating a physical barrier that prevents cattle from direct access to the water's edge. Alternative cattle watering options are examined so that farmers maintain a clear supply of water for their cattle. These may include wells, ponds, nose pumps, windmill pumps or drinking tubs.

Landowner (farmers) contact for this program was based on the response of interested farmers to an information package and application form, specially aimed toward assisting farmers in restricting cattle access to the Cornwallis river and its tributary streams. The information package and application form were distributed to DNR District offices and Department of Agriculture Regional offices in April - May 2001. Initial landowners contact, with respect to the fencing program, has been based on those applications that appear to meet the criteria for the program.

Farmers identified as being eligible for the program are asked to sign an agreement in which they consent to comply to the terms of a written contract (in which farmer assumes responsibility for the maintenance of the fence for fifteen year period, or for as long as they run cattle on the property). Financial assistance is provided by DNR and FOCRS once the terms of the agreement are established and agreed upon by all participants.

To date several farmers have returned completed applications for fencing assistance to Reg Newell of the Department of Natural Resources in Kentville. In conjunction with Derick Fritz and Gram Fisher of the Friends of the Cornwallis River Society, interested farmers are being contacted and approached in order to assess their properties and circumstances with respect to their eligibility for the fencing program.

Property assessment is based on the level of impact or potential impact to riparian habitats by cattle and the overall scope of the fencing required to restrict cattle access to stream side habitats. The cost of fencing and labor and other materials involved in a particular property are determined by Reg Newell and Derick Fritz, based on materials (ie the type of fence, number of posts, alternate watering sources, etc.) Recommended by the livestock farmer. Several and/or cattle watering options may be examined for a particular property in order to determine which approach or method is most cost-effective and practical over the long term.

### **Cropland Leasing Program**

The cropland leasing program is designed to assist cropland farmers interested in creating a buffer between their ongoing agriculture land uses and the riparian edge. The leasing program involves the delineation ( with permanent markers of a 5 meter min) buffer between agriculture and and the edge of the watercourse. Farmers retain access to the water for irrigation and other purposes, however vegetation within the buffer zone is allowed to regenerate to its natural state. The friends of the Cornwallis River have hired Derick Fritz as their Riparian coordinator to identify potential farmer participants who qualify for funding under this program.

The cropland leasing program itself involves the leasing of cropland along the river and/or its tributaries. Land is leased from the farmer for \$25.00 an acre (a 1 kilometer buffer 5 meters wide = 1 acre) for a minimum of ten years so that the farmer receives \$250.00 per acre over the ten year time frame. In some cases the project may involve replanting of riparian habitat with nantive trees and vegetation. The cropland leasing program involves the drawing up of a lease agreement between the Friends of the Cornwallis River and eligible landowners. This document will clearly layout terms and conditions applicable to both parties.

### **Fencing Program - In Partnership with Friends of the Cornwallis River**

#### **Landowner Contract**

As of August 22, 2002 Five landowners have been contacted with respect to potential assistance with fencing projects. Farms were visited and the sites were examined by Reg Newell and Derick Fritz, between June 01, 2002 and Aug 30, 2002 in order to determine the impacts to riparian habitats, and also to determine the amount of land involved and the types of materials required. Based upon site visits, estimates of costs were established based on length of fence required, types o materials used in construction, labour costs and any additional costs such as alternate watering apparatus, or gravel required to protect stream banks at cattle crossings.

*Derick Fritz*  
*Friends of the Cornwallis River*

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