

Vida Mae Lantz
Secretary, NS Habitat Conservation Fund
Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Division
136 Exhibition Street
Kentville, NS B4N 4E5

RE: Final Report - Habitat Conservation Fund Project - Youth Leading in Stewardship Program

All invoices have been previously submitted. This document and accompanying DVD constitute the final report on the project as needed for completion of the project and final payment.

Our project fit under the Education objective of the FUND, specifically, to develop an awareness and appreciation among children and young adults as to the importance of wildlife habitat, and, to develop an appreciation and understanding of habitat conservation issues among the public.

During the week long workshop the students engaged in many activities intended to give them an appreciation of their common Gulf of Maine bioregion. They shared experiences and results of their home site projects, were introduced to the physical and cultural setting of the conference, engaged in team building activities, and were introduced to concepts and approaches to wildlife habitat project planning.

At the heart of the conference was participation in four theme projects for which the students were divided into mixed jurisdiction (MA, NH, NB, NS) teams led by a knowledgeable naturalist or scientist. The projects were; St. Mary's Marsh (Peter MacDonald, DNR); ToyMakers Marsh (Warren Paton, Naturalist); Insects as Indicators of Water Quality (Dr. Mike Brylinsky, Acadia); and Mi'kmaw Uses of Watersheds (Shalon Joudry, Environmental Programs Officer, Bear River Band). Each project involved an introduction by the team leader, project planning by the students, a day in the field investigating issues, development of ideas, and presentation to a public body. Essentially, the students were engaged in a real but condensed project planning, execution and presentation experience that can be applied to future wildlife habitat projects in which they will be engaged. They bring this experience back to their own home site projects and other students. They gain awareness and appreciation of habitat issues, but beyond that, they gain the ability to do analysis of issues, foster change, and gain the support of others through presentation skills.

The panel of citizens, to whom the students presented included: Tony Duke, NS Department of Natural Resources; Scott Lister, NS Department of Environment and Labour, Donna Tidd and Faye Haley, Tri-County Regional School Board; Brent Kaulback, Nova Scotia Community College; Andrea Doherty, Dalhousie School of

Nursing; Roger Outhouse, Bay of Fundy Discovery Centre; and Francine Wallace; St. Mary's Bay Resource Centre.

This presentation experience provided an opportunity for the students to gain experience in bringing habitat issues to the attention of a broader public audience. One of the concepts we try to convey to the students is that they are, at present, active and productive citizens and have a right and obligation present an informed discussion of issues that are of importance to them.

Acadia University is using the Gulf of Maine Institute program as a research project. A graduate student associated with the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research and the Department of Education is doing a linear study of the state of and changes in environmental attitudes among students participating in the GOMI program. She attended the workshop and conducted interviews as the first sample of their work. She will be conducting similar interviews at subsequent workshops.

The enclosed DVD provides further documentation of the project. *Overview* provides a general look at the conference from the student point of view. *Theme Projects* provides an overview of presentations to the citizen panel.

The Habitat Conservation Fund provided us with assistance at a critical juncture in 2006 and was instrumental in allowing us to run the workshop. As a result of the workshop, and work by others associated with TREPA and the Gulf of Maine Institute since then, we have stimulated considerable student interest in Nova Scotia related to wildlife habitat and participation in the 2007 workshop in New Hampshire.

The Barrington team is continuing work on dune restoration (with Reg Newell) but anticipates adding an adopt-a-stream project on the West Branch of the Barrington River; three schools in Yarmouth are interested in adopt-a-stream projects on Broad Brook (an urban stream); the youth environmental group in Bear River is now active; the Bay of Fundy Discovery Centre Association has expressed interest in working with Islands Consolidated School on the Northeast Cove watershed; and we have a person interested in bringing a Wolfville, Bay of Fundy, team in being. We plan to bring these groups and the New Brunswick team together for a mini-conference in May 2007 at Acadia University. Your funding has had a tremendous multiplier effect in the student population with whom we work.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need further information.

Sincerely,

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