

Final Report  
Ecology Action Centre  
Coastlines Natural History Column

**A. Project Goal and Objectives**

For the general public, private landowners, and resource users to develop an appreciation and understanding of coastal habitat conservation issues, coastal ecology, and biodiversity in order to encourage their participation in protecting, conserving, and managing wildlife habitat.

- Develop 15 thematically linked Coastlines columns about beach systems, coastal biodiversity, and wildlife that include tips for natural resources management and stewardship.
- Foster coastal stewardship among private landowners, resource users, and the general public by distributing Coastlines monthly via 12 community newspapers and the internet.
- Engage five provincial experts on coastal ecology in writing Coastlines columns to share their knowledge with a general audience.

**B. Outline of the work completed;**

**Preparatory work (May – June 2007)**

- Contacted all community newspapers in Nova Scotia via email and follow up phone call to identify papers interested in Coastline articles
- Created contact database of provincial newspaper and editors interested in receiving Coastlines identifying their specific area of interest.
- Worked with Bird Studies Canada to develop a detailed plan of themes, topics, authors and timeline for Coastlines series for entire year (attached)
- Drafted authors guidelines (attached)
- Contacted potential authors and helped them develop focus of their articles

**Ongoing Coordination and Administration (May 2007 – July 2008)**

- EAC and Birds Studies Canada staff wrote four Coastlines articles

- EAC staff and BSC staff coordinated preparation of eleven Coastlines columns including working with authors to revise text, locate appropriate images, and all editing
- EAC staff coordinated the distribution of Coastlines to 18 newspapers in Nova Scotia, as well as the EAC website [www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines) and Bird Studies Canada newsletter.

### **Expansion activities (September 2007 – ongoing)**

- EAC developed a survey for newspapers assessing support and interest for Coastlines and seeking feedback on improvements that would increase retention rate (survey and results attached)
- Four Coastlines columns were translated into French and ran in French newspapers and in the French section of our website.
- EAC submitted a proposal to LUSH to increase the marine conservation outreach components of series.

### **C. Results**

- Twenty-four newspapers around Nova Scotia received and regularly ran Coastlines columns (list of newspapers receiving Coastlines attached)
- Fifteen Coastlines columns were produced (list of topics, author and dates they appeared is attached. All Coastlines columns can be viewed at [www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines)
- Three Coastlines articles were translated into French (available at [www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines))
- As indicated by the survey of newspaper editors, editors found Coastlines a useful and relevant addition to their newspapers
- Reader feedback as indicated by emails from readers around the province has been appreciative, especially on columns about species or habitat
- Partner organizations such as Clean Nova Scotia, and Nova Scotia Nature Trust that produced columns said it helped their programs become more well-known around the province.

## **D. Achievements and lessons learned measured against the project goals**

The past year (2007-2008) was the first time Coastlines was developed along thematic lines. Our focus was beach systems features, flora and fauna. We also prepared a Coastlines column every 6 weeks and not weekly as in previous years. Overall, the switch in formats was positive. Running fewer columns and offering higher honorariums ensured a higher quality and more consistent style and format. We also saw that being able to write about the seasonality of beaches (winter shorebirds in February and jellyfish in July) allowed us to connect readers directly to what they could see and observe on a beach at a particular time of year. We were also able to repeat certain key coastal conservation messages a few times in slightly different ways to ensure the importance of, for example, avoiding trampling on dune systems, was well understood.

On the other hand, the focus on beaches meant that some papers, particular in the Bay of Fundy region did not always find the series directly relevant to their readership. They suggested that the thematic format was appreciated, but should choose ecosystems that are common all around the province. This is one of the main reasons while the current (2008-2009) Coastlines articles will focus on freshwater ecosystems on Nova Scotia.

Overall, Coastlines was successful in meeting all its deliverable and in achieving positive impacts in increasing knowledge of coastal conservation and habitat stewardship. We heard from some readers that they bought their local paper solely to read Coastlines and numerous groups around the province wrote to ask if they could write a Coastlines article to highlight their issue.

## **E. Recommendations for follow-up steps to the project.**

As already mentioned, the 2008-2009 Coastlines series will be about Nova Scotia's freshwater ecosystems. We expect to reach a wider readership and also entice a new group of writers and contributors. We will continue to seek funding for translation of Coastlines as this was a very well received initiative. We also hope to seek additional funding to find ways to provide Coastlines to schools and other youth oriented publications.