



Habitat Conservation Fund- Final Report

Hope for Wildlife Environmental Day Camp and Workshop Expansion

Project Goal: To change the everyday habits of Nova Scotians and to help them create and participate in projects that help wildlife and habitats in Nova Scotia. Participants learn how animals are connected to their environments, and how humans can have a positive effect on wildlife and their habitats by changing their habits to reduce their impact on the environment. They also learn and participate in activities that help protect, conserve, and restore habitats in Nova Scotia.

Project Objectives:

The objectives of the day camp:

1. Participants will learn how by changing everyday habits, they can help reduce their impact on the environment and they will learn how this relates to wildlife and their habitats.
2. Participants will participate in activities which help the environment and will also be encouraged to make a change at home that helps the environment.

The four workshops and the objectives of each:

Workshop #1- Build and Install Bee Boxes:

- to build and install 5 bee boxes; to educate participants about the importance of bees in the environment and to our food supply

Workshop #2- Build and Install Wood Duck Nesting Boxes:

- to build and install 5 wood duck nest boxes; to educate participants on wood duck habitat destruction in our community and why nest boxes are important; to educate participants on how to monitor and maintain nest boxes

Workshop #3- Build and Install Bat Houses

- to build and install 5 bat houses; to educate participants about the importance of bats in the ecosystem; to teach participants how to maintain and enjoy their bat house

Workshop #4- Beach Clean Up

- to clean 3km of local beach of litter and debris; to educate participants about the effects of litter on beach habitats

Outline of work completed:

March/ April 2011- Hired a project coordinator, recruited volunteers, recruited guest speakers for workshop; researched where to obtain appropriate permissions to install wildlife structures

May/ June 2011- Research and develop workshop program, revise day camp program, advertise day camp and workshops, hire and train daycamp leaders

June/ July 2011- Camp and workshop, registration takes place, development and printing of educational materials (activities, workbooks, etc.) completed

July/ August 2011- Camp program delivered, workshops delivered, wildlife structures installed, Open House display completed

October/ November- Follow up surveys sent out to participants, Survey information is compiled and final report is completed

Results: The Summer Day Camp program was completed as planned. We were unable to receive support from local experts to install the wood duck nesting boxes; a fourth workshop focussing on coyotes and bears and their interactions with humans was completed instead. The remaining workshops were completed as indicated in the project objectives.

Achievements and Lessons Learned: The incredible pull that wildlife and wild environments have on the human spirit was clearly demonstrated by the enthusiastic response to the summer day camp and workshop programs. During each week-long camp, the changes in behaviour and attitude towards the environment were evident in each participant; they became focussed and more observant of the natural world around them as they explored the habitats around the camp facility. Camp activities included: demonstrations by a wildlife veterinarian, beekeeper and falconer, creating fictional animals and developing suitable habitat and building mini-biospheres. At the end of each camp, each child presented what they had learned during the week to the other participants and their families; each child also made a commitment to their peers to make changes to their life at home. Many parents reported that their child(ren) were demonstrating environmental awareness outside of camp as well.

The original intention of the workshops was for children to attend with their parents and complete the activities as a family; what we found was that we had mostly adults attend and very few brought children. This resulted in the workshops acting as open discussions of the environmental topics rather than formal presentations, a change that was positively received by the participants. A total of 10 bee houses and 7 bat boxes were constructed, and 3 km of shoreline were cleaned. Out of those who responded to the follow-up emails, all but one had installed their completed wildlife structure.

Follow-up Steps: With such a positive response to both programs, the Hope for Wildlife Society will continue both the summer day camp and family workshop programs in 2012. The results of the projects will be evaluated by the project coordinator, who will make recommendations for improving and further developing the programs. A new program targeting youth aged 14-18 is also being developed.
