



HALIFAX WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 31055, Halifax, NS, B3K5T9

December 31, 2013

Reference: Final Report for year one for the “exchange of lead ammunition for non-lead ammunition”.

Acknowledgement:

The Halifax Wildlife Association recognizes the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund for their financial support of this project. It is through the Habitat Conservation Fund that Hunters and Trappers are able to direct financial support to specific conservation related projects such as the lead exchange program.



Executive Summary

Take-up of the ammunition exchange exceeded expectations and demand exceeded supply near end of year. The most notable single group participating was from the Aboriginal community.

Advertising and promotion could greatly assist in moving the program ahead and have potential participants to get involved even without an exchange.

Discussions with people from all walks of life confirm that a volunteer program is the best way to proceed.

Suppliers and distributors are willing to actively participate in the program.

Present events outside the control of the program give strong evidence that non-lead ammunition be the choice of the majority much quicker than expected. We are at the forefront of a North American shift from lead to lead-free alternatives.

Availability of non-lead alternatives is expected to quickly expand and drop in price.

There is still much to do. However, we have established a foothold and can leverage the situation to significantly move the program forward.

Recognition for leading edge thinking and initiative could be capitalized on if positioned and promoted appropriately. The Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund through DNR could leverage this recognition to enhance and expand its image.

Incorporating parts of this program into the Hunter Safety program, the hunting report card and the Firearm certification course could enhance acceptance and public awareness.

Project Goals and Objectives:

- 1) Immediate reduction by hunters of introducing lead into animals and environment.
- 2) Inform, educate and migrate a significant number of hunters from using lead-based ammunition.

Work Completed:

- Obtained permission to utilize the NSFAH newsletter to position and explain the project, prepared article and placed in newsletter.
- Obtained permission from NSFAH to place information on web site. Placed information on NSFAH and HWA web sites.
- Obtained commitment from Dr Helene Van Doninck, Dr Edward Kirk, John Fraser, Ann Pollard and Michael Pollard to conduct field work and major presentations.
- Dr. Helene Van Doninck conducted presentations around the province, in New Brunswick and the US. See attached list as Appendix "A".
- Obtained limited quantities of CDs and printed material and articles. Accessed internet and obtained numerous articles on subject matter and distributed.
- Set up booth at Sport and RV show to promote awareness of program. Emphasis was placed on the funding received from the Habitat Conservation Fund, which in turn gets its funding from Nova Scotia hunters.
- Set up a booth at Dollar Lake during their Parks Day event and promoted the program with emphasis on the Funding received from the Habitat Conservation Fund.
- Worked the booth at the Guy Show in Halifax in cooperation with Crossman, providing pellet gun shooting opportunities while delivering information on the non-lead program with emphasis on the funding received from the Habitat Conservation Fund.
- Met with several distributors of ammunition and obtained their cooperation in the program. Explained the role of the Habitat Conservation Fund in the program. Have distributors on side in Halifax, Dartmouth, Truro, Lantz, Bridgewater and Annapolis.
- Set up a contact center with telephone line and email address. Manned center.
- Attended the Natural Resources Central Division 2013 Woodland Owner of the Year event with a booth to promote the non-lead program. Emphasis was placed on the funding received from the Habitat Conservation Fund.
- Attended the Nova Scotia Hunting and Outdoors Show in Truro and manned a booth to promote the non-lead program.

- Attended the Hnatiuk's sportsman event in Lantz and made a public announcement regarding the program, the level of distributor support that has been received and the assistance of the Habitat Conservation Fund that provided the financial capability to deliver the program.
- Investigated the caliber of ammunition in common use, determined quantities needed to conduct the program and obtained a supply of non-lead ammunition for exchange.
- Exchanged ammunition in the Cape Breton Highlands during the moose hunt, at our ammunition center on a weekly basis, at the event booths and in many towns around Nova Scotia. In total by this date we had exchanged 122 (2,440 actual rounds of ammunition) full boxes of ammunition with at least another 25 boxes pending as soon as we could get a further supply of specific calibers.
- Presented updates at NSFAH Board of Directors Meetings (each quarter at Shubie and Elmsdale meetings and at AGM in March) to keep all the clubs informed and HWA (to BOD once a month except July and August and to members on the third Wednesday of Feb, April and Oct) and HWA members.

Results:

- The hunting community of Nova Scotia reacted well to the program, to the extent that we exchanged all non-lead ammunition in stock and we are holding requests for additional quantities of ammunition if the program runs a second year. Due to the limited amount of funding relative to the originally-conceived scope of the program we did not have enough quantity to supply everyone who wanted to participate. However, many hunters who approached us to exchange ammunition told us to save the non-lead for others who needed it and they would purchase some for themselves.
- It soon became evident that if the program were to succeed we needed to get first hand information regarding the non-lead ammunition. We received extensive enquiries regarding where to obtain non-lead ammunition of specific calibers and requests to obtain information regarding ballistics associated with specific calibers.
- In order to have first hand information we made arrangements to actually fire several of the main calibers ourselves. We arranged field days and fired 257, 25-06, 6.5X55, 270, 7mm Mag, 308, 30-06 and 300 Mag. At ranges from 100 to 900 yards and recorded all results. Hunters were most appreciative to know that we did our homework and had actual experience with the ammunition.
- Collected actual hunting and harvesting results from hunters using non-lead. Made this information part of specific presentations and exchange meetings. Data to date included three separate hunts for moose in Cape Breton where non lead was used with hunters reporting exception harvest results due to ammunition. These hunters were Sonny Mahoney (Aboriginal), Dennis MacLeod (aboriginal) and John Keeping. Also several excellent results provided by numerous aboriginal hunters many of whom did not want to disclose names. David Buell and Devon buell reported first hand use of the non lead ammunition and were so pleased that they joined our organization to promote the use of non lead. Dr Edward Kirk hunted moose in British Columbia with John Godberson and William Fraser. Dr Kirk provided some non lead ammunition at his own expense for the hunt. Dr Kirk harvested a large moose

and reported outstanding performance from the ammunition. The other hunters harvested a elk and a mule deer with observations of similar performance to Dr Kirk. George Mccarthy and Charlie Thoms were introduced to non lead ammunition by Michael Pollard at the Bull Meadows range in Halifax for hunting deer in NS. However, both George and Charlie had a moose hunt in Newfoundland where they also reported excellent results. John Fraser reported that he had never observed a white tailed deer being dispatched so easily and quickly as he did using non lead.

- Exceptional response was received from the Aboriginal community to the extent that a significant number of hunters purchased non-lead ammunition on their own. When approached regarding the program they knew about it, supported its objectives and were already adopting non-lead.
- Amongst the general public, individuals who identified themselves as non-hunters showed keen interest in the program as they linked it to saving wildlife, specifically eagles. Many non-hunters wanted to know how to purchase a Habitat Stamp in order to assist with the program. Discussion with DNR is to follow as a number of barriers to gaining funding for the Wildlife Habitat Fund through this mechanism were identified.
- All distributors approached regarding cooperating with the program were willing to do so.
- Three main distributors offered to bring in non-lead ammunition in such quantities to support the program even before we could pay them. We therefore had access to all the ammunition we could purchase.
- There are several old ammunition calibers that a small numbers of hunters wanted that just were not available, such as 35 Caliber and 32 Special. This did not cause any significant issue as most of those hunters were willing to utilize a different caliber in order to hunt using non-lead.
- Exceptionally positive reaction to presentations was experienced. The vast majority accepted the concept and felt the voluntary aspect that enables them to make a choice is a major positive component of the program.
- Both hunters and non-hunters gained an appreciation of the work being done by the NS Habitat Conservation Fund and also the role conservation being delivered through hunter donations of time, money and energy.
- Public recognition has been received through social networks that Nova Scotia is a place where leading edge activities in conservation are taking place and that we can be proud of our role.
- DNR publically announced a move to non-lead in December of 2013.
- The State of California passed a law in 2013 mandating the use of non-lead by hunters in that state. This law is to be effective by 2015. While this move by California further confirms the basis for undertaking this initiative, it stands in stark contrast to the public acceptance achieved here through a voluntary program.
- The United States military announced the move to “green” ammunition (meaning non-lead) by the year 2018.
- It seems evident from issues arising in the US that our program using education, understanding, acceptance and adoption is far superior to a program of mandatory introduction. Although our program may not get everyone converted immediately it also does not get subversive activities.

- Due to announcements by the state of California and the US military and through discussions with some of the major ammunition manufacturers, it is evident that non-lead ammunition will become more available, less expensive and actually replace lead much sooner than we had predicted when we first suggested this program.

Lessons Learned:

- The volunteer nature of moving to non-lead is extremely important to most people. However, there seems to be a small portion of the target group that will not adopt the change to non-lead on a voluntary basis and some of those who might even attempt to subvert a mandatory program.
- People were very interested in the relationship of our project and the NS Habitat Conservation Fund and that hunters were the direct contributors to the fund. Further, many people asked how they could contribute to the fund without being a hunter. This information was provided directly to DNR at the NSFHA BOD in Shubie.
- Anyone involved in direct contact with the hunting community regarding this program must have first-hand information on actual usage of the ammunition. You need to be able to talk hunting with hunters and talk all the aspects of shooting, including trajectories, accuracy, energy, penetration, expansion and harvesting results.
- Further target communities were identified, included fishermen who shoot seals with lead ammunition and leave them in the water to be scavenged when they was ashore. Eagles are among the wildlife that scavenges the dead seals.
- The Aboriginal hunting community were more willing to move toward non-lead on their own than we had expected. The Aboriginal hunting community has a greater affinity with the animals (eagles) at risk through the use of non-lead than do mainstream hunters.
- Non-hunters could be a significant support group to this and other programs if an easy way to purchase a Habitat Stamp were made available and the public were made aware. Today individuals of the public are not able to contribute to the Fund by purchasing a Habitat Stamp unless that person is in possession of an NS Wildlife Resources card.
- A network of exchange locations having a supply of ammunition would be more efficient than a single location. Investigation into how to utilize the ammunition distributors in this regard is being undertaken.
- Shotgun slugs need to be included in the program. We missed the importance of this in the original design of the program
- We could be a significant catalyst for conversion to non-lead on a National level if we wished to seize the opportunity.
- There is a requirement for a significant increase in marketing and promotion than in just lead exchange. Positioned properly the promotion aspects may be able to convert a significant portion of the hunting community to adopt non-lead without any exchange.

Recommendations:

- Evolve the program to address promotion, expand the funding and extend it another year.

- Leverage this program's success to address the opportunity to have non-hunters purchase Habitat Stamps.
- Utilize Government resources to support the program through a cooperative promotional program.
- Position the program with other provinces. There is a cross interest with Environment and interest by them in promoting the move to non-lead ammunition has been identified.
- Include aspects of the program into the hunter safety course.

Total Value of program:

- The monetary value associated with saving specific wildlife cannot be calculated but its impact on hunters and non-hunters was significant as measured by the positive reaction to the program.
- The original financials associated with the program were estimated at \$70,671 including \$25,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund. However, The Habitat Conservation Fund provided \$9,500 and we did not purchase the CDs for \$4,000 as a good supply was donated. Although HWA felt that the total program would come in at much less than budget we found the in-kind activities took up more time, effort and expense than expected and therefore the total expenditures are very close to the original budget even with the lower contribution from the Habitat Conservation Fund. Final financials have been prepared and sent to DNR for review.

Confirmation of Habitat Conservation Fund contribution:

- At all exchanges of ammunition and all interactions with hunters and the public, at all Board meeting and presentations it was acknowledged that financial support was obtained from the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund. We did not have banners or signs at our booths showing the Conservation Fund involvement but we did stress to visitors to the booth where the actual money was from and why.
- On the NSFAH and the HWA web sites it is also acknowledged.
- In our presentations it was acknowledged.

Appendix A

Presentations by Dr. Helene Van Doninck

Jan 23, 2013 Lunenburg - Lunenburg Wildlife Assoc Meeting

Feb 2, 2013 Halifax - Conservation Officers Assoc Meeting

Feb 6, 2013 Fredericton NB - Maritime College of Forest Technology

Mar 4, 2013 Millbrook NS - Chief Bob Glade - Millbrook First Nation
Mar 6, 2013 Sackville NS - Sackville Rod and Gun Club
Mar 28, 2013 Halifax NS - Nova Scotia Bird Society
Apr 6, 2013 Port Hawkesbury NS - Eastern Woodland Assoc Meeting
Apr 18, 2013 Truro NS - Glooscap Heritage Centre Earth Day Presentation
May 23, 2013 Dartmouth NS - Environment Canada Office for Aboriginal Awareness Week
June 11, 2013 - Truro NS - Cobequid Salmon Assoc AGM
June 13, 2013 - Bible Hill NS - DNR Wildlife Technician and Biologist Meeting
Sept 8, 2013 - South Dakota Wildlife Federation, Rapid City, South Dakota
Oct 17, 2013 - DNR Regional Director Meeting - Oak Island

Presentations/demonstrations by others:

HWA Board of Directors meeting
HWA member's night
HWA AGM
Regional Woodlot of the year gathering, Scots burn
Guy show, Halifax
Truro Sportsmen show, Truro
Sport and RV show, Halifax
Parks are for People event at Dollar Lake
Hnatiuk sportsmen show, Lantz
Hunter Mountain ammunition exchange, Cape Breton