



## Habitat Conservation Fund- Final Report

### Oiled Wildlife Education and Response Team

Project Goal: To raise awareness of the threats to wildlife and habitats from improper disposal, illegal dumping and accidental spilling of petroleum products and to establish a response team for such incidents.

Project Objectives:

- Recruit, train and maintain a network of volunteers to assist in cleaning oiled wildlife and develop and deliver education programs
- develop a permanent educational display about the threats to wildlife and habitats from petroleum products
- provide educational information on existing HFW website

Outline of work completed:

A project coordinator was assigned to recruit volunteers, establish a communication network, research training options and coordinate training. They also researched and compiled data for the educational display and website.

Between May and December 2013, 64 new wildlife responder volunteers were recruited and received basic wildlife rescue training developed and provided by Hope for Wildlife. 50 volunteers took further training through the Oil Spill Volunteer course, administered by the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. This course “is designed to prepare potential oil spill volunteers in what to expect at an accidental uncontrolled release of oil into the environment” (theIWRC.org). Topics included health and safety, legal considerations, handling, stabilization and care. This course was an introduction and recommended pre-requisite to the Oiled Wildlife Washing Workshop training developed and provided by Allison Dubé based on protocols and best practices established by Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research and the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (UC Davis).

A permanent visual display was developed for the Hope for Wildlife Learning Centre.

New information about oiled wildlife was added to the Hope for Wildlife website ([www.hopeforwildlife.net/oiled.html](http://www.hopeforwildlife.net/oiled.html))

Results: The project objectives were met. 64 new volunteers were recruited; 50 received IWRC training for volunteering in an oil spill scenario plus the Oiled Wildlife Washing Workshop training. This team of volunteers is ready to respond should NS face an oil spill. Public education objectives were met through the planned addition of a permanent display in the Hope for Wildlife Learning Centre and on the website. The Oiled Wildlife Washing Workshop teaching materials are now also available to new volunteers that join the team.

Achievements and Lessons Learned: There was a very high response to volunteer recruitment and training opportunities. We had originally planned to offer a single course, but the IWRC course allowed a large number of volunteers to participate, and because it was online it was easy to accommodate varying schedules. By having an introductory-type course, we could ensure attendees of the washing workshop all had the same minimum background knowledge and could cover the necessary topics with the group.

Follow-up Steps: Ongoing training and review will help ensure trained volunteers maintain their knowledge and skills. With materials now compiled and a workshop structure developed, it will also be possible to offer additional workshops.