



HALIFAX WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION

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

February 15, 2015

Reference: Final Report for year 2014 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

This year saw a continuation of the activities started last year and ongoing development of the network of relationships that drive this initiative forward. Our activities have resulted in increased awareness, inquiry, presentation and acceptance of the program. Continued requests for presentations keep our workers busy and helped spread the word regarding the program. Take-up of the ammunition exchange exceeded expectations and demand exceeded supply near end of year even with the additional ammunition provided by one of our vendors, Green Diamond who donated in excess of \$700 worth of non-lead product at no charge to the program. Further, we received support and even donation from many of the clubs that make up the NSFAH and other organizations such as the Aboriginal community.

The most notable single demographic participating in the program came from the Aboriginal community.

Advertising and promotion and further presentations could greatly assist in moving the program ahead and have potential participants get involved even without an exchange. This year produced a significant number of hunters purchasing their own non-lead ammunition and several distributors carrying additional quantities of product.

Further discussions with people from all walks of life confirm that a volunteer program seems the best way to proceed and to have hunters embrace the program.

Additional suppliers and distributors were 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 strong 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: (continuation of last year.)

- 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, Michael Pollard, Frank and Marie Oram, Davida Buell, Aaron Pollard and Devon Buell 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 a new supply of CDs on non-lead hunting and a supply of CDs from Barnes manufacturing regarding the performance of their non-lead products and printed material and articles. Continued internet searches 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, Antigonish and Annapolis.
- Continued the contact center with telephone line and email address. Manned center.
- 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.
- Continued to research 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 in excess of 10,000 actual rounds of ammunition. At present we still have requests for in excess of 1,000 rounds of ammunition that we cannot supply at this time but will do so as soon as we could get a further supply of specific calibers.
- Presented updates at NSFAH Board of Directors Meetings 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 activities we are conducting seem to be working, based on the results and reaction to date. Even after year end, we are getting calls every week regarding presentations and exchange.
- 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 another 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, again this year 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.
- Our assumption from last year proved correct in that 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. Our ability to answer such questions and provide insightful information directed many callers to obtain their own non-lead products.
- We gained first-hand information by making arrangements to actually fire several of the main calibers ourselves. Again this year 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.

- Throughout the year we continued to collect actual hunting and harvesting results from hunters using non-lead. We incorporated this information into part of specific presentations and exchange meetings. Data to date has become fairly extensive and includes accounts of successful hunts in the Cape Breton moose seasons, moose hunts in Newfoundland, moose and elk and bear in Alberta and BC, and many white tail hunts in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Alberta and BC. Hunters have expressed their delight in the results and exceptional harvest results due to non-lead ammunition. Once again, the results recorded by specific Aboriginal hunters were many and of exceptional quality.
- The Aboriginal community continued to extoll the quality of the non-lead ammo. 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. The program expanded this year and we are hopeful that new distributors of significant reputation that will be opening in the region in 2015 will also become part of the program.
- Again this year 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. These same players have already arranged for ammunition for 2015 based on the reaction of the previous years.
- 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 is still the case to date. However, 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.
- Again, 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.
- At present, the Government of Nova Scotia is conducting research regarding the introduction of Sunday hunting. If Sunday hunting is allowed, we feel strongly that it will contribute significantly to increased hunting, hunting success and to additional new hunters. This may provide an opportunity to address this expanding market and move an increased community to non-lead use.

Lessons Learned:

- The volunteer nature of moving to non-lead is extremely important to most people to the extent that we have observed greater numbers of hunters obtaining their own non-lead. 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. We now tell people to make a direct donation to the NS Habitat Conservation Fund if they wish. This information was provided directly to DNR at the NSFAH BOD in Shubie.
- It has been confirmed that all workers conducting presentations and non-lead exchange need to fully understand the issues associated with the program. 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 wash ashore. Eagles are among the wildlife that scavenges the dead seals.
- The Aboriginal hunting community continue to show they are more willing, on a per capita basis, 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 still being explored.
- 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. To that end we have had discussions with representatives in New Brunswick and Ontario.
- 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. Therefore, if the program continues to be funded it is important that such a shift is part of the program.

Recommendations:

- Continue to run the program and engage as many people as possible.
- 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 expanded positive reaction to the program.
- The original financials associated with the program were estimated at \$74,671 including \$17,500 from the Habitat Conservation Fund. However, with additional presentations, travel and the donations from several organizations that were included into the program, the final result was 78,003.96. From the results associated with last year's program HWA felt that the total program would again come in over budget. Our assumption was correct. We found the in-kind activities took up more time, effort and expense than expected and therefore the total expenditures were in excess of \$4,000 over budget and have

been absorbed by the program. 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

South Shore Wildlife - Bridgewater

Woodlot Owners – Springhill

Green Diamond Day – Bayers lake

Cape Breton Days – Cape Breton Highlands

Eastern Shore Wildlife – Sheet Harbor

Wildlife Park – Shubie

BOW – Cooks Brook

DNR – Liscombe

St Francis Xavier – Antigonish

Aboriginal feast – Hunter’s Mountain

Presentations/demonstrations by others:

HWA Board of Directors meeting

HWA member’s night

Aboriginal Feast

HWA AGM

Guy show, Halifax

Truro Sportsmen show, Truro

Sport and RV show, Halifax

Parks are for People event at Dollar Lake

Hnatiuk sportsmen show, Lantz

Cape Breton moose hunt

Eastern Shore Wildlife

LaQuille Store

Green Diamond Day

Woodwise, Bridgewater

South Shore Wildlife.