



HALIFAX WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION

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

December 28, 2015

Reference: Final Report for year 2015 for the “exchange of toxic ammunition for non-toxic 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 previous year’s activities and ongoing development of the network of relationships that drive this initiative forward. However, several issues arose that have direct impact, both positive and negative on the program:

- 1) Helene Van Doninck was awarded a significant non-repayable grant to conduct work regarding toxic ammunition and toxic substances in fishing and costs associated with presentations and the creation of awareness. She received approximately \$32, 000 this year and will get another \$33,000 for 2016. Helene informed the HWA that she wished to donate her total time, travel and other expenses associated with our program and apply those costs to her own funding. This saved the program approximately \$2,000 for 2015. This money was spent on the purchase of ammunition.
- 2) The increase in the American dollar compared to the Canadian was immediately felt in the cost of our ammunition and therefore workers from HWA made

recommendation that we direct most of the funds normally spent on travel and mileage toward ammunition and only take \$370.73 instead of the \$2,730.20 allocated this year for expenses and travel and mileage. The total money redirected to the purchase of ammunition was \$2,359.47.

- 3) To date Dr. Van Doninck and our organization have conducted over 100 individual presentations. Every presentation has resulted in increased awareness, acceptance and requirement for ammunition.
- 4) Direct input to the program from the public, agencies and groups have resulted in a slight change in positioning and wording and has resulted in the program moving away from references to "lead" to a more all-encompassing reference to toxic. Many people associated directly with the environment find the reference to toxic ammunition more descriptive and embracing of this program in context with overall environmental issues et al.

Our activities to date 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 (again this year) 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 last year came from the Aboriginal community. Although this community continued to engage us in the exchange and use of non-toxic ammunition they have now been superseded by the mainstream community of hunters on an aggregate basis if not from a per capita perspective. However, several individuals from the Aboriginal have taken it upon themselves to collect lead ammunition within their communities and act as the collecting agent for us. This reduces our time and effort but still allows us to do presentations within those participating communities.

Advertising and promotion and further presentations greatly assisted in moving the program ahead and have potential participants get involved even without an exchange. Again this year produced a significant number of hunters purchasing their own non-lead ammunition and several distributors carrying additional quantities of product. The addition of Bass Pro and Cabelas in our region have added additional suppliers with an increased variety 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 with Green Diamond holding a non-toxic client day at their facility in Halifax. Further, Bass Pro and Cabelas are both very interested in moving forward with active participation that will include allowing the HWA to make presentations and hold exchanges in both facilities.

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

Availability of non-toxic alternatives is expected to quickly expand and drop in price within the USA. However, the impact of the falling Canadian dollar may result in an overall increase in product.

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. Most notable in this regard is the number of references to the program from different DNR offices. We hope that the move to DOE from DNR of some key people will assist to get DOE also onboard with our program.

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.

One area of disappointment with regard to our program came from a joint venture between Parks Canada and the Aboriginal Community of Nova Scotia. After several meetings regarding the moose extermination within a twenty square kilometer area of the National Park near North Mountain, we could not get any confirmation that the hunters would be instructed to utilize non-toxic ammunition for this concentrated effort. However, as this program of moose extraction is expected to continue beyond 2015, we will continue to participate in meetings and push to get non-toxic ammunition utilized as raptors and other predators will congregate to exploit the glut of available food from such a concentrated program.

Project Goals and Objectives:

- 1) Immediate further reduction by hunters of introducing toxic substances into animals and environment.
- 2) Continue to inform, educate and migrate a significant number of hunters from using toxic-based ammunition.
- 3) Leverage relationships to assist in above Goals and Objectives.

Work Completed: (continuation of last year.)

- The introduction of muzzle loaders into the Nova Scotia hunting community has resulted in a significant buy-up of such rifles. Further, this has resulted directly in requests for non-toxic ammunition for these new rifles. Most of these are in fifty caliber and a good supply of non-toxic product is available through our existing suppliers. However, it adds a new additional requirement for a significant amount of fairly expensive product. If we act promptly on these requests we may be able to have non-toxic ammunition be the standard for a significant number of new hunters.
- 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, David Buell, Aaron Pollard, Eddie MacKenzie, David Taylor 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. John Fraser and Dr. van Doninck made presentations

to the CBC in PEI. They were interviewed and made a demonstration of non-toxic ammunition at a range in PEI.

- 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.
- 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 distributor's on-side in Halifax, Dartmouth, Truro, Lantz, Bridgewater, Antigonish and Annapolis. Further, five new suppliers (Bass Pro and Cabelas) who are located in Moncton and suppliers in Canning, Antigonish, and Truro N.S. have adopted the program and were able to supply so specific product. Further, the supplier network is also an excellent source for presentation requests and demand for non-toxic product.
- Discussed with contacts at Cabelas regarding the opening of a new store in Dartmouth Crossing scheduled for 2016/2017.
- Continued the contact center with telephone line and email address. Manned center.
- Continued to research the caliber of ammunition in common use, determined quantities needed to conduct the program and obtained a supply of nontoxic 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 35,000 actual rounds of ammunition. At present we still have requests for in excess of 4,000 rounds of ammunition that we cannot supply at this time but will do so if the program is continued in 2016. We are keeping a list of emails and telephone numbers to contact as soon as we are able to fulfill requests.
- Presented updates at NSFAGH 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.
- HWA as made a request to the Canadian Wildlife Association through their biologist Mr Brilliant to host a presentation by Helene Van Doninck on the non-toxic program. Further, HWA has made a formal request of the NSFAGH at the last BOD meeting to also ask CWF for a presentation by Dr. van Doninck.

Results:

- The activities conducted in 2015 are continuing to work, based on the results and reaction to date. Even after the deer and moose seasons, we are getting calls every week regarding presentations and exchange.
- Excellent quality referrals from DNR offices resulting in requests for both presentations and non-toxic ammunition. Several people have contacted us and made mention that DNR supplied such good information that the person just went out and purchased their own non-toxic product.
- The hunting community of Nova Scotia is continuing to react well to the program, to the extent that we exchanged all non-toxic 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 and the addition of muzzle loaders 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-toxic for others who needed it and they would purchase some for themselves.
- Our assumption from the last two years of program 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-toxic ammunition. We continue to receive extensive enquiries regarding where to obtain non-toxic 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 more first-hand information this year 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. This year we also utilized some new calibers such as 270 WSM, 300 WSM and 338. All toxic ammunition used was obtained from exchange stores and non-toxic was supplied by individuals associated with the program and did not deplete existing supplies associated with the program.
- Throughout the year we continued to collect actual hunting and harvesting results from hunters using non-toxic ammunition in the field. 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 the quality of non-toxic 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-toxic ammo. Exceptional response was received from the Aboriginal community to the extent that an increased number of hunters purchased non-toxic ammunition on their

own. When approached regarding the program they knew about it, supported its objectives and were already adopting non-toxic product.

- Again this year, 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 who do not have an FAC or Wildlife card 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 2016 will also become part of the program.
- Again this year three main distributors offered to bring in non-toxic 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 2016 based on the reaction of the previous years.
- There are several old ammunition calibers that a small numbers of hunters want that just were not available, such as 35 Caliber, 32 Special and 303 British. 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-toxic product.
- 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-toxic 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 and has actually been implemented. 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-toxic ammunition will become more available, less expensive and actually replace toxic product much sooner than we had predicted when we first suggested this program.

- In 2015, the Government of Nova Scotia conducted research and stakeholder input sessions regarding the introduction of Sunday hunting. Hunting on Sunday hunting was implemented for the first two Sundays of the regular big game rifle season. We feel strongly that it has contributed significantly to increased hunting, hunting success in a very poor year and to additional new hunters. This may provide an opportunity to address this expanding market and move an increased community to non-toxic use.

Lessons Learned:

- Support from areas such as DNR, our retail distribution network, clubs associated with the NSFAH and other has contributed greatly to the success and buy-up of the program.
- The volunteer nature of moving to non-toxic is extremely important to most people to the extent that we have observed greater numbers of hunters obtaining their own non-toxic product. However, there seems to be a small portion of the target group that will not adopt the change to non-toxic on a voluntary basis and some of those who might even attempt to subvert a mandatory program.
- People continue to be 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, not holding an FAC or Wildlife card. 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 last year.
- It has been confirmed that all workers conducting presentations and non-toxic 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 the reasons for the program and the 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.
- Fishermen who shoot seals with toxic ammunition and leave them in the water to be scavenged when they wash ashore were among our new target groups. Eagles are among the wildlife that scavenges the dead seals. Therefore we discussed this issue with the Aboriginal community and discovered we needed to address calibers not normally used for regular hunting such as 223 and 22-250 if we were to get the toxic product replaced in the environment.
- The Aboriginal hunting community showed previously they are more willing, on a per capita basis, to move toward non-toxic 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-toxic than do mainstream hunters. However, the mass of mainstream hunters has finally swayed the totals toward the mainstream hunters even though per capita results still belong to the Aboriginal community.
- 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. However, at every opportunity we provide information that individuals can make a direct contribution to the Habitat Fund.

- 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 and therefore included them to a limited availability this year. Next year will require a more robust move into this market if we feel the need. Shotgun slugs for deer are being greatly replaced by the continued introduction and expansion of muzzle loaders into the hunting community.
- We could be a significant catalyst for conversion to non-toxic on a National level if we wished to seize the opportunity. To that end we continue to have discussions with representatives in New Brunswick and Ontario and are addressing a requirement to make presentation at the CWF in order to get attention by hunters across Canada.
- There is a requirement for a significant increase in marketing and promotion than in just non-toxic exchange. Positioned properly the promotion aspects may be able to convert a significant portion of the hunting community to adopt non-toxic without any exchange. Therefore, if the program continues to be funded it is important that such a shift is part of the program. To this end, Dr. Helene Van Doninck has committed to utilize a large portion of her new Fund to support our program and continue to make presentations without impacting the cost of our program.

Recommendations:

- Continue to run the program and engage as many people as possible.
- Leverage the Fund of Dr. Helene Van Doninck to assist to get more presentations to a greater audience.
- 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 \$64,709.80 including \$15,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund. However, with Dr Van Doninck paying for her own travel and HWA paying for their own travel except for \$370.73, the final result was \$67,108.12. 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 \$2,398.32 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 meetings 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 30, Maritime College of Forest Technology

Mar 5, Atlantic Veterinary College

Mar 28, New Brunswick Conservation Officers Assoc

Apr 14 - DNR Biologists and Wildlife Tech Meeting, Debert

May 28, North Nova Forest Owners Cooperative – Wentworth

July 23, Land and Sea Interview

September 24, Florida Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Conference, Haines City, Florida

October 3, Annapolis Animal Hosp Open House display - New Minas

October 6, Kings County Wildlife Assoc, Kentville

Oct 8, Feast in the Highlands, Hunter's Mountain

Oct 21, Halifax Wildlife Association, Halifax

October 27, NSCC, Truro

Nov 6, Ontario Wildlife Rehabilitators Education Network. Niagara Falls

Nov 24, Truro Fire Hall, Truro

Presentations/demonstrations by others:

HWA Board of Directors meeting

HWA member's night

Aboriginal Feast

HWA AGM

Guy show, Halifax

Sport and RV show, Halifax

Land and Sea Interview

Hnatiuk sportsmen show, Lantz

Cape Breton moose hunt

Eastern Shore Wildlife

LaQuille Store

Green Diamond Day

Woodwise, Bridgewater

South Shore Wildlife.