



Mike Dembeck



Final Report: *Conserving the Lower Musquodoboit River*

Habitat Conservation Fund Grant to Nature Conservancy of Canada, Atlantic Region

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PROJECT SUMMARY

1. PROJECT GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project was to secure important upland and wetland habitat along the Lower Musquodoboit River, in Halifax Regional Municipality. An area of active and ongoing NCC land assembly, this project was successful in achieving its goal of protecting key parcels of land in support of the shared long term vision of conservation here. This goal was achieved with the successful acquisition of three land parcels totalling 166 acres and containing rich and high quality forest and riparian wetland habitats. All supporting objectives were completed.

2. DESCRIPTION of WORK COMPLETED

Land Securement

NCC's standard land securement processes were undertaken. Landowner contact and relationship development yielded the opportunity to acquire lands identified as high priority in NCC's conservation plan for the region. Once basic due diligence was conducted, including acquiring satisfactory evidence of clear title and a professional appraisal of the property value was conducted, Agreements of Purchase and Sale was established with two separate landowners. Both landowners were families with longstanding ties to the region. Two parcels were purchased, while the third was donated. The properties were migrated to the land registration system and on December 15th, 2016 NCC took ownership of 50 acres in a single parcel and in January 30th, 2017 NCC took ownership of 116 acres in 2 parcels and on closed the deal and took title to the property, protecting it for conservation.

Fundraising

A total of \$155,554.43 was raised for this project. In addition to the generous \$50,000 contribution by hunters and trappers through the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund, the project involved a small land donation as well as contributions from the Government of Canada, under the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and private, anonymous individuals.

Land Stewardship

A baseline inventory of species and ecosystems present will be completed in summer 2017. NCC's existing Musquodoboit River Property Management Plan will be updated to document and consider the ecological and anthropogenic features of the sites and identify priority actions.

The sites will be open and available for public use and enjoyment, including traditional activities such as hunting and fishing. The sites support intact and fully functioning riparian floodplain, forested floodplain and mixedwood forest types that will not require active management at this point in time.

3. RESULTS

A total of 166 acres of habitat, including extensive riparian wetland area, Red Oak-Black Cherry floodplain forest and upland mixedwood forest types has been protected for conservation, adding to a significant land assembly now totalling over 528 acres (see map). The Lower Musquodoboit River area provides habitat for snapping turtle, river otter, Atlantic salmon, sea-run brook trout and a variety of waterfowl including wood duck, common merganser and American black duck.

A total of \$155,554.43 was raised from a wide variety of sources to achieve this result and contribute to the long term vision for conservation along the lower Musquodoboit River. Basic stewardship and management planning documentation including a baseline inventory and management planning have been undertaken to help ensure the biodiversity and conservation values the site possesses remain intact. Public announcement of the acquisitions will be made at a later date.

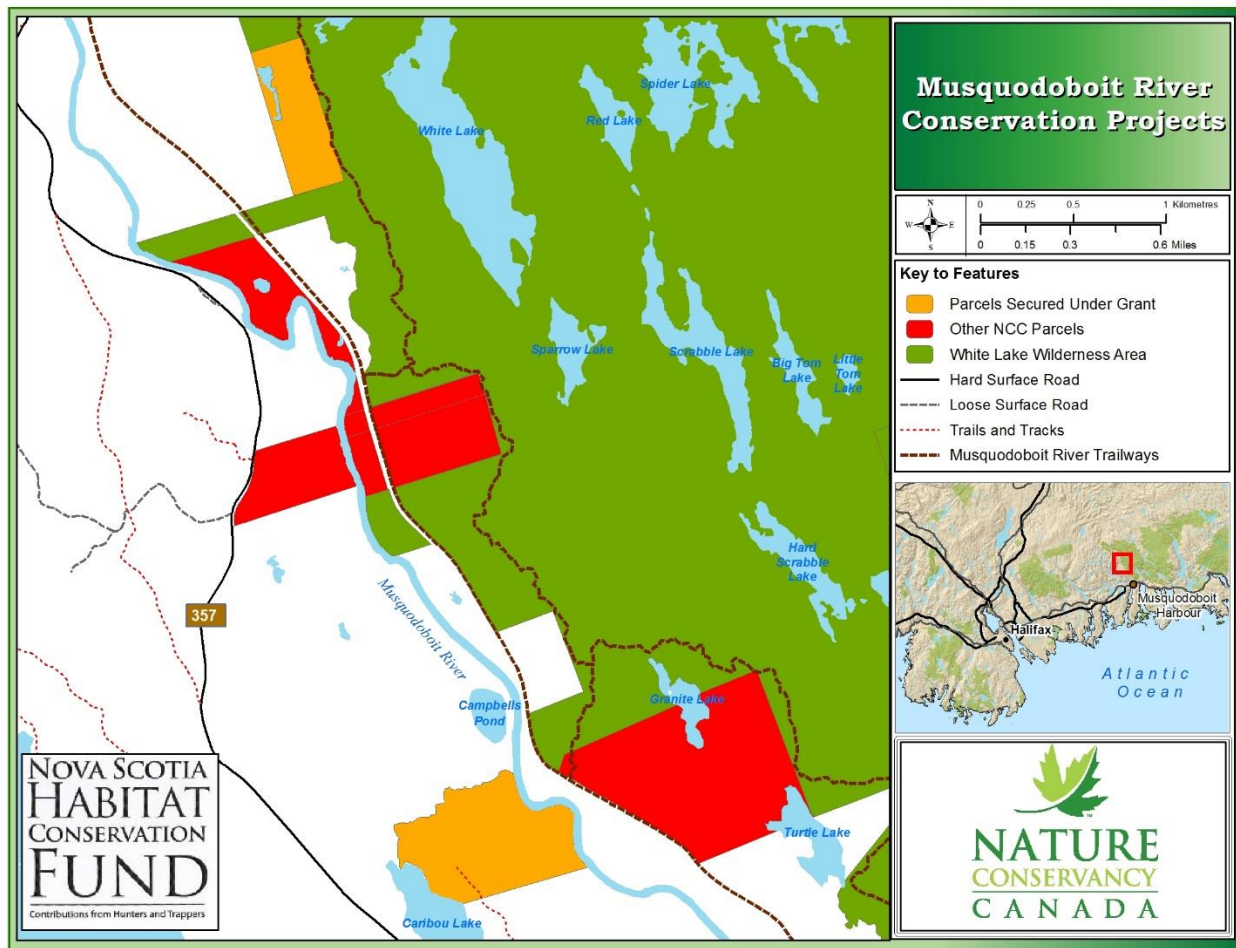
4. ACHIEVEMENTS, LESSONS LEARNED, RECOGNITION

These successful acquisitions have pushed NCC conservation lands at Musquodoboit River to over 528 acres. It has also spurred a renewed local interest in NCC's work. The generous contribution of \$50,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Contributions from Hunters and Trappers helped leverage other contributions from the Federal Government and the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust. This contribution will be recognized at a future public announcement. Roadside and interpretive signage at the site has been installed and includes the Habitat Conservation Fund logo.

5. NEXT STEPS

NCC will continue land protection efforts at Musquodoboit River to solidify current conservation land holdings including acquisition of adjacent parcels and other high priority parcels as identified in NCC's Natural Area Conservation Plan for the region. Landowner contact efforts are ongoing and NCC staff will conduct outreach and education programming on the sites, summer 2017.

Musquodoboit River Property Acquisition – Map and Photos





Kelly's Meadow, Lower Musquodoboit River including lands protected by Nature Conservancy of Canada



Lower Musquodoboit River, focus on ongoing land assembly by Nature Conservancy of Canada



Hiking the backcountry trails in the Lower Musquodoboit River Valley



The Musquodoboit Trailway, managed by the Musquodoboit Trailways Association runs parallel to the river and offers excellent access and scenic vistas of the Lower Musquodoboit