



## **Trapper Mentorship Program**

### **Final Report**



**2016 - 2017**

## **Summary**

During the 2016-2017 years with the support of the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund, the Trappers Association of Nova Scotia (TANS) was able to provide 50 new trappers with hands on experience, knowledge of wildlife management and ethical trapping methods. The Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund enabled TANS to offer these field trips across the province.

Field trips were scheduled between June and December 2016 with each day lasting from 7 to 9 hours. Mentoring was offered at various locations this year and involved 9 trapping educators, two project managers and one coordinator. Each student participated in hands-on activities, such as setting traps, making sets, wildlife behavior, habitat management, dog proofing, landowner relations, personal safety and current up-to-date trapping equipment. The hands-on element of the program gave students the opportunity to fully experience how to manage a trapline while instilling an appreciation for the natural environment.

Surveys indicated a high level of student satisfaction with the program. All participants strongly agreed they learned a lot of valuable information from their field trip. Sixty five percent of students did not think there was any improvement needed, including comments like "I'm not sure it could be improved", "needs no improvement" and "Keep it going for the young trappers." The majority of respondents indicated the program exceeded their expectations.

## **Project Goals**

### ***Goal***

The goal of the Mentoring Program was to increase awareness of humane trapping methods and dog proofing sets to young trappers. To increase trapper participation through a highly functional Mentoring Program focusing on natural renewal products from fur bearing animals. To make young trappers aware of sound habitat and wildlife management for today, tomorrow and future generations. The program also aimed to target new trappers so they will make sound trapping choices as adults and ensure they continue to protect wildlife habitat.

### ***Result***

TANS increased student awareness about the importance of wildlife habitat by engaging 50 Nova Scotia students through the TANS Mentoring Program.

## **Project Objectives**

1. To increase young trapper participation

### ***Result***

The TANS was able to expose 50 students to hands on trapping experience. Based on survey results the majority of respondents indicated they plan to trap in the next

trapping season. From the 36 students who indicated how much they would spend on trapping activities next season, the average amount was \$525.00 per respondent.

2. To educate young trappers on trapping humanely, using correct methods/equipment and stress the importance of dog proofing traps. To provide general knowledge about trapping and sustainable use of natural renewable products.

**Result**

The TANS instructors were given an instructor's lesson plan, which included the following outcomes: Dog proofing, current approved traps, landowner relations, respect other user groups, public relations ( i.e., keep dead animals out of sight), trapping ethics, trap setting (i.e., conibear, colony, leghold and snare), trapping safety, set making (2-3 sets or more) and how to manage a trapline.

3. To educate young trappers on safety methods, trapping ethics and how to set traps for several target species.

**Result**

Instructors were instructed to allow time for each student to practice making each set by themselves. During the set making process, students were prompted to identify safety risks and how to reduce those risks (i.e., conibear safety, PFD, warm cloths etc.)

**Description of Activities**

<b>Task:</b>	<b>Period:</b>
Secured funding from TANS and the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund	June 2016
Hired a Coordinator	June 2016
Coordinator contacted instructors and provided instruction	June-December 2016
Coordinator contacted students	June-December 2016
Safety kits were made up and sent to instructors	June-October 2016
Cheques were mailed to all parties	June-December 2016
Final report prepared, cancelled cheques were compiled	January - March 2017

**Project Results**

In the 2016-2017 mentoring years, the TANS completed all proposed qualitative objectives in delivering the Mentoring Program. Engaging 50 Nova Scotians in our Mentoring Program, the TANS increased trapper participation and awareness of trapping safety, ethics and has provided a lifetime of knowledge. All students participated in the field day and demonstrated to the instructor the sets they learned. In total two sponsors generously sponsored \$35, 737.55 (Appendix 2) towards the delivery of the 2016-2017 TANS Mentoring Program. Students developed an

appreciation for trapping, wildlife management and associated habitats and were encouraged to take action for protecting these resources for today, tomorrow and forever.

The trapping safety kits were given out to each student. Instructors showed each student how to properly use equipment through an interactive and hands on activity.

Support from the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund provided the means to mentor 50 students, supply safety kits and teaching students the importance of wildlife management and habitat conservation. Students were mentored from all of the following counties: Cumberland, Colchester, Pictou, Hants, Halifax, Kings, Annapolis, Lunenburg and Yarmouth. The TANS hired a coordinator to facilitate instructors and students.

### **Project Assessment:**

Feedback forms were given issued to all of the 50 participants who attended the Mentoring Program after being mentored. We received 50 completed feedback forms (100% response rate). Students responded that their age groups ranged from 10-15 years old to 31 years and up. We mentored **5** females and **45** males. Part of the 50 students were **at-risk-youth**. The majority of students heard about the Mentoring Program from the Trapper Education Course, the TANS Annual Workshop and by the TANS e-mail. Eighty percent of respondents indicated they enjoyed the hands on portion of the program, many expressed "it is the best way to learn". Most respondents indicated the program to be excellent and one hundred percent said they would recommend it to someone else. The habitat fund was acknowledged on all correspondence to instructors and students. The feedback form and comments from respondents can be found at the end of this report (Appendix 1).

### **Financial:**

The Nova Scotia Habitat Fund contribution of \$18,000 represented 50% of the overall program budget of \$35,737.55 and 50% of the funds came from the TANS either as in-kind donations or cash contributions. Please see Appendix 2 for expenditures covered under the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund contribution of \$18,000.

### **Communication and marketing:**

The TANS has a booth program, during the events the Mentoring Program was advertised at each of the seven booths held throughout the year. The TANS also promoted the Mentoring Program in their quarterly newsletter and at each of the Trapper Education Courses.

**Conclusion:**

The TANS Mentoring Program was enormously successful this year and educated students from a large portion of the province. The TANS continues to see education as a priority area within this province. We are currently reaching 25% of new trappers and will continue to expand with your assistance.

We are extremely grateful to have the continual support from the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund. Registration for the 2017-2018 year is underway and we currently have 31 students applying for next year. We are confident that the Mentoring Program will continue to build on its previous successes. As such, the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund has been integral to the success of this Mentoring Program. It will continue to expose new trappers to wildlife and habitat management and encourage them to protect this resource.