



## **Trapper Mentorship Program**

### **Final Report**



**2017 - 2018**

## **Summary**

During the 2017-2018 years with the support of the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund (contributions from hunters and trappers), 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 2017 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. Fifty-two percent of students did not think there was any improvement needed, including comments like “Don’t think you can, it was great!” and “program was great as is.” From the remaining forty-eight percent of respondents, most indicated that they would like “more” mentoring instruction.

## **Project Goals**

### ***Goal***

The goal of the Mentoring Program was to increase awareness of humane trapping methods and dog proofing sets to new trappers. To increase trapper participation through a highly functional Mentoring Program focusing on natural renewal products from fur bearing animals. To make new 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 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. New trappers indicated increased confidence in handling gear safely and in their trapping abilities.

## **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 34 students who indicated how much they would spend on trapping activities next season, the average amount was \$540 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, foothold 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 clothes etc.)

## **Description of Activities**

<b>Task:</b>	<b>Period:</b>
Secured funding from TANS and the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund	June 2017
Hired a Coordinator	June 2017
Coordinator contacted instructors and provided instruction	June-December 2017
Coordinator contacted students	June-December 2017
Safety kits were made up and sent to instructors	June-December 2017
Cheques were mailed to all parties	July 2017-February 2018
Final report prepared, cancelled cheques were compiled	January - March 2018

## **Project Results**

In the 2017-2018 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 \$31,597.48 towards the delivery of the 2017-2018 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 across the province, from Cape Breton to Yarmouth. The TANS hired a coordinator to facilitate instructors and students.

## **Project Assessment:**

Feedback forms were 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 <9 years old to 31 years and up. We mentored 4 females and 46 males. The majority of students heard about the Mentoring Program from the Trapper Education Course, the TANS Annual Workshop and by the TANS e-mail. Most of respondents indicated they enjoyed the hands on portion of the program, many expressed that it is the best way to learn. Most respondents indicated the program to be excellent and said they would recommend it to someone else. The habitat fund was acknowledged on all correspondence to instructors and students.

## **Financial:**

The Nova Scotia Habitat Fund contribution of \$18,000 represented 57% of the overall program budget of \$31,597.48 and 43% of the funds came from the TANS either as in-kind donations or cash contributions.

## **Communication and marketing:**

The TANS has a booth program, during the events the Mentoring Program was advertised at more than 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. In 2017 we were able to reach an increased number of new trappers (38%) 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 2018-2019 year is underway. 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.