

FROGLANDS PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

PROJECT SUMMARY

Using the Annapolis watershed in southern Nova Scotia as a test bed, the frog-lands project was created for the development of wetland conservation and stewardship in this region. This program will encourage local organizations and schools to adopt a wetland assuming responsibility for its protection. Using a community stewardship agreement, the degree of protection will range from a simple letter of understanding to a formal conservation easement under the appropriate Nova Scotia legalization. The participants will be trained and equipped to conduct simple inventories, undertake monitoring and to develop and implement ideas for long term protection of this valued resource.

PROJECT GOAL SUMMARY

Develop a community based private stewardship program for the protection of wetlands within the Annapolis watershed.

PROJECT GOAL SPECIFICS

1. Expand the *Frog Land* monitoring kit developed for *Frog Watch '96* to include inventory, monitoring and management supported by appropriate training. This will involve the development of a community stewardship agreement with landowner ensuring access to the site by the *Frog Land Stewardship* participants.
2. Identify community groups/schools who are interested in participating in the wetlands program. This will include development of training and promotional material.
3. Identify wetlands within the watershed that might be included in the program and match these areas with community organizations. This would include securing landowner participation.
4. Research and develop a model stewardship agreement that might be utilized in the project. This may entail negotiations with landowners.
5. Utilizing volunteer participants whenever possible, undertake the mapping and inventory and tasks related to developing a comprehensive overview of the wetland.

Objectives:

1. 25 *Frog Land Stewardship* monitoring kits
 - Instead of 25 kits, a general kit was developed that could be adapted to any wetland area. The kit was adapted for 11 school groups and three 4H groups.
2. 2 to 4 specialized assessment, monitoring And management sessions for a total of 30 people
 - Presentations were made to three 4H groups in the Annapolis Valley. # groups at approximately 30 persons per group = 90 people.

- Presentations were made to eight different school, to at least two classes in each school and up to all of the classes in other schools (7 classes). In total 28 classes at approximately 30 persons = 840 people.
- Presentations were made at two camps in the last spring. Each camp had approximately 50 people. Two camps at 50 people = 100 people.

Total number of people = 1030 people.

3. Completion of a model community stewardship agreement that ensure participants have access to the wetland site.

- This was done - please see Appendix #3.

4. Inventory, monitoring and management programs supported by community stewardship agreements covering 200 hectares of privately owned wetlands

- St. Mary's Elementary School, Aylesford - Klahanie Kamp Ground - 100+acres
- RC Gordon School, Greenwood - Fales River - 30 acres
- Dwight Ross School, Greenwood. - Fales River - 30 acres
- Margreetsville Elementary School - Margreetsville - Jane White's Wetland - 25 acres
- Bridgetown Elementary School - Bridgetown - Soloman's Chute - 5 acres

Totaling 190+ acres = 80+ hectares.

5. Individuals and groups involved in the inventory, monitoring and management of wetlands

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Annapolis East Elementary School, Middleton | Grade 4 |
| 2. Annapolis Royal Regional Academy, Annapolis Royal | Grade 6 |
| 3. Berwick Elementary, Berwick | Grades 3, 5 and 6 |
| 4. Bridgetown Elementary, Bridgetown | Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 |
| 5. Cambridge Elementary School, Cambridge | |
| 6. Dwight Ross, Greenwood | Grades 3 and 5 |
| 7. Evangeline Middle School, New Minas | several grades |
| 8. Margreetsville Elementary school, Margreetsville | All grades interested, |
| 9. RC Gordon School, Greenwood | Grades 5 and 6 |
| 10. St. Mary's Elementary School, Aylesford | Grades 4, 5 and 6 |
| 11. Coldbrook Elementary School, Coldbrook | Several Grades |
| 12. Mountain Ridge 4-H Club, Wilmot | |
| 13. Seabreeze 4-H Club, Margrestville | |
| 14. Misty Trail 4-H Club, Bridgetown | |

ACHEIVEMENTS

It was felt that contacting schools in the Annapolis watershed area would be a good way to go about starting the wetland outreach program. Twenty-one schools received a letter describing the wetland program, describing why CARP was involved with this program and inviting the school to participate (See Appendix #1). A similar letter was also sent to 4H groups in the area. Twelve of the schools showed interest in the project with eleven of the schools receiving the wetland presentation (The other one school was unable to fit the program into their remaining school term). Five of these schools had a wetland within walking distance of their school and permission was given from the wetland owner for the school to visit the wetland. Nine 4H clubs were sent letter with three 4H groups receiving the

wetland presentation. All of the schools who received the presentations were interested in an ongoing wetland program, and all wanted to adopt a wetland to teach the school children about conservation, restoration and monitoring of a wetland.

Wetland activities were compiled from several sources to be used by students. The Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supplied the outline from a wetlands program in Ontario that included sample activities along with field equipment such as hand held lenses, nets, field books etc. The Metro Toronto Zoo supplied information on their *Adopt-a-pond* program. Some of the activities were adapted from Joseph Cornell's *Sharing the Joy on Nature* and DNR's Project Wild book. Ducks Unlimited supplied four different wetland videos to be included in the reference packages sent to the schools and community groups. Environment Canada supplied fact sheets for each school dealing with: Wetlands, The benefits of wildlife, biodiversity, Bird feeding, Estuaries, Migratory bird sanctuaries, Nest boxes and What you can do for wildlife. The information above along with other gathered information are included in the wetlands package sent to a group who are interested in participating in the wetland program.

A letter was submitted to the Blomidon Naturalist Society newsletter that is distributed throughout Kings county along with parts of Annapolis County (see Appendix #2). The letter was looking for persons who were interested in participating in a wetland stewardship program. From this and other outreach programs there are several volunteers involved with the wetland program. We have volunteers who are taking water samples, volunteers offering their wetlands, and volunteers offering their support in the wetland program.

The Department of Natural Resources supplied wetland maps for the Annapolis watershed area. From these maps it was easy to locate wetlands to be used in the stewardship program. The landowners of the wetlands were then approached and told about the stewardship program and asked if they would be interested in joining. A community stewardship agreement was drawn up between the landowner and the Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) to allow the community group and the landowner to enter into a stewardship agreement together. (see Appendix #3). A code of ethics was drawn up for when the students visit a wetland on private property - the issues in the code of ethics were agreed upon by the groups, the landowners and CARP. (see Appendix #4). We currently have verbal permission for the use of five wetlands with three of these who have entered into the agreement.

All of the schools in the Annapolis Watershed area have been contacted again this September to offer the wetland program again this term. We have already heard from three schools with definite interest in the program again, and I know more schools will call when the school year begins. Overall all achievements were met and exceeded.

APPENDIX #1 : Letter sent to schools within the Annapolis watershed inviting the schools to join in the wetland stewardship program. A similar letter was also sent to the 4H groups in the area as well.

April 24, 1997

Mr. John Verran
Kentville Schools
School Street, Kentville,
Nova Scotia
B0P 1R0

Dear John Verran:

The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) is a charitable, community-owned organization created to work with communities and organizations to foster the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the freshwater and marine ecosystems of southwestern Nova Scotia's Annapolis River and its watershed. Our mandate is to carry on research, education and action programs that will provide the basis for sound environment decisions that affect the Annapolis River and its watershed, and the health of the natural and human community.

As part of this mandate we have developed a wetlands naturalist program. The program is designed to give local citizens the opportunity to discover *frog-lands* or wetlands. In doing so they will gain "hands on" experience and knowledge about frog-lands in your area, learn about the importance of wetlands to our everyday lives, help protect a local *frog-land* and the many plants and animals that live in it, and contribute to the world-wide efforts to protect amphibians and their habitat. Part of the wetlands naturalist program will focus on school groups within our area, specifically grades four to six.

We would like to offer you the opportunity to have an enthusiastic, knowledgeable naturalist come to your school to present programs specifically designed to help students become more aware of the importance of a healthy wetland not only to them, but to the wildlife in their community. These programs will be offered in May and June of 1997.

Each program will consist of a short introductory session on wetlands followed by a tour of a wetland within walking distance from your school (where possible). We have developed a series of activities designed to encourage all students to participate in discovery and appreciation of wetlands. The program is quite flexible in time allocation and content and can easily be incorporated into a number of subjects that you are currently teaching in your school.

Please discuss this with the appropriate teachers in your school. If you would like to have this program presented to your students, please contact myself at the address below. Please indicate when your school would like to have the program(s), as well as, an alternative date in case of conflict with other school requests. We would be happy to incorporate any comments, or requests you may have that would help me make the program "fit" your class or situation. I look forward to your response to this exiting opportunity.

I have enclosed a registration form for project funding through Habitat 2000 which will provide funding up to \$200/class or \$500/school for sustainable habitat projects.

Yours truly,

Karin Robertson,
CARP Wetlands Naturalist

APPENDIX #2: Letter submitted to the Blomidon Naturalist Society:

The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) is a charitable, community-owned organization created to work with communities and organizations to foster the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of

the freshwater and marine ecosystems of southwestern Nova Scotia's Annapolis River and its watershed. Our mandate is to carry on research, education and action programs that will provide the basis for sound environment decisions that affect the Annapolis River and its watershed, and the health of the natural and human community.

CARP is developing, in partnership with Wildlife Habitat Canada, Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, Nova Scotia Department of Natural resources, Acadia Center for Estuarine Research, Nova Scotia Museum, a community-based private stewardship program for the protection of wetlands within the Annapolis Valley Area. Karin Robertson, the project leader, supported by a Project Team, will work with community groups, schools, and landowners to identify, evaluate, monitor and protect wetlands.

We are looking forward to working with local landowners, schools groups and community groups on this exciting project. If the Blomidon Naturalist Society or any of its members are interested in becoming involved in the wetlands stewardship project please contact Karin Robertson at (902)532-7533 or (902)678-1253 or email: shawbold@fox.nstn.ca

APPENDIX #3: Stewardship Agreement drawn up between CARP and Wetland landowners. The issues in the stewardship were agreed upon by both CARP and the landowners.

THIS COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT made in duplicate this nth day of August, 1997.

BETWEEN: CLEAN ANNAPLOIS RIVER PROJECT, a non-profit society, duly incorporated under the laws of the province of Nova Scotia, with head office in Annapolis Royal, in the county of Annapolis, Province of Nova Scotia. (Hereinafter called "CARP")

- and -

(Landowner of the wetland area), in the county of (put county name here), in the Province of Nova Scotia (Hereinafter called "the Landowner")

WHEREAS CARP has sought the assistance of private landowners in an "adopt a wetland" program so that (name of school) can use the wetland area for education and conservation purposes.

AND WHEREAS the landowner holds title to approximately (size here) ha. of wetland and has entered into an agreement to allow the school to use this property for educational and conservation purposes.

NOW THEREFORE THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH that, in consideration of the premises and of the mutual covenants hereinafter contained, the school and the landowner covenant and agree as follows:

1. The landowner and CARP are not responsible for injury from visiting the wetland
2. The landowner agrees to maintain the property in a natural condition and agrees to notify the school of any possible changes or activities which may endanger the school when visiting the site.
3. The school agrees to use the property for only educational purposes and agrees not to adversely effect the property.
4. CARP is not responsible for damage to property by the students.
5. The school agrees to abide by code of ethics for visiting wetlands.
6. In return for the use of the land the students will offer monitoring of human activity on the wetland along with biological surveys, mapping and water quality testing.
7. The school agrees to provide reports for the landowner to show progress and findings from the "adopt and wetland" work.
8. A signed copy of this agreement is to be made available to CARP.
9. This agreement expires in 1 year time hereof, and runs with the land. The project is being run for one year as a trial. After 1 year the agreement can be renewed.

10. Termination of this agreement by either party may be done so at any time by notice of termination in writing given at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date of termination specified therein. If the land owner feels the land is being adversely effect or has good reason to revoke the agreement, the arrangement will expire immediately with reasons given to CARP to be forwarded to the school. If the land owner does not want the school on the property any longer, the CARP and land owner can reach a mutual agreement to have the school off the land in three (3) days.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the School and Landowner have hereunder set their hands by their respective proper signing officers duly authorized in that behalf on the day and year written above.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED
in the presence of:

Witness

Landowner

Witness

Landowner

Witness

CLEAN ANNAPOLIS RIVER PROJECT

PER:

AND PER:

Appendix #4: Code of Ehtics:

CODE OF ETHICS FOR STUDENTS VISITING WETLANDS ON PRIVATE
PROPERTY

1. Treat a wetland with the utmost of respect and appreciate its beauty.
2. DO NOT litter; pick up any garbage you find
3. DO NOT pick flowers, bark off trees, or any plants. There are unique and rare plants on the wetland that need to be conserved. Learn to identify plants so that we also do not step on rare or poisonous plants.
4. DO NOT disturb wildlife (i.e. beaver dams, bird nests), but observe and enjoy the wildlife!
5. Do not throw rocks or dirt, especially into the water.
6. Listen to the leader of the group
7. Limit the use of the property to only within class trips or for class purposes.
8. Enjoy the sights, sounds, feel of nature!
9. Note the changes in the property over time - inform the landowner if there are any drastic changes
10. Enhance the ability of the wetland to support wildlife - bird boxes, bat boxes etc.