



Wildlife Habitat Canada • Habitat Faunique Canada

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WILDLIFE HABITAT CANADA'S RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT CANADA'S CONSULTATION ON THE HABITAT CONSERVATION STAMP

Who Are We?

- A national non-profit organisation established in 1984 responding to the continuing loss of wildlife habitat across the country
- Focusing on habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement, especially in wetlands and for wetlands-associated species

What Do We Do?

- Invest money paid by waterfowl hunters for the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp
- Fund projects in habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement
- Raise and leverage additional funds from a variety of other sources to enhance conservation activities

How Much?

- Since 1984 we have invested about \$52 million in projects and activities
- Of that, about \$32 million has come from the Stamp program
- Our grant program in 2006/07 is about \$1 million of the \$1.35 million we expect to receive from the Stamp

Where Are The Projects?

- There are projects right across the country
- Over time, there is a rough geographic balance related to where the hunters are, which is where the money comes from
- In any given year, projects may be concentrated to make best use of the money

Who Do We Work With?

- Landowners who have an interest in habitat conservation and stewardship, including farmers, ranchers and rural property owners
- Provincial, territorial and municipal governments
- National and regional non-governmental organisations
- Almost all projects include a funding partnership, providing leverage of Stamp money
- Many have been part of NAWMP (North American Waterfowl Management Plan)

What Don't We Do?

- WHC is not an advocacy group, launching petitions or court cases
- WHC does not fundraise in competition with other national or local NGOs

How Does WHC Respond To Environment Canada's Consultation Document?

- The document can be found at http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/legislations/tim-st_con/index_e.cfm
- WHC has clear answers to each of the questions posed:
 1. Continuing to collect a habitat conservation fee with the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit is the most effective and efficient way of generating dedicated conservation revenues for habitat conservation
 2. Continuing the long-standing arrangement with WHC is the most effective and efficient administrative arrangement for managing these revenues

Generating Conservation Revenues

- Hunters are willing to contribute additional funds directly to habitat conservation, as long as it is clear the money will be used for conservation, and not to support government programs that should be funded through general revenues
- WHC agrees that the amount going to support conservation should be as high as possible, and has made internal changes to cut its costs to ensure that is the case
- Experience in the provinces has shown that when governments keep the funds internally, the money gets diverted to support staff and internal programs
- Environment Canada says their costs are increasing – how long will it be before they decide to keep some or all of the money for their costs if the choice is to simply raise the Permit fee or manage the funds internally?
- Even if the funds are not diverted to cover administrative costs, how will we know the funds will continue to be additive, and not simply replace the current (inadequate) funding?

The Habitat Conservation Stamp

- Showcases Canadian wildlife artists through an annual competition to choose the image used for the Stamp and Print
- The annual collectable stamps and limited edition prints have a world-wide distribution, drawing attention to Canadian wildlife and habitat conservation
- Creates other revenue streams to support habitat conservation, beyond the contributions from hunters
- Broadens the community supporting habitat conservation to include stamp collectors and art collectors
- Provides a visible reminder every year of the reason habitat conservation is important – to conserve Canadian wildlife
- Provides a visible reminder every year that the funds are being collected for conservation, making it harder for the government to change that fact

A Habitat Conservation Levy

- With the proper changes in the regulations, revenue can also be generated by the addition of a simple note on the Permit and it is undoubtedly cheaper for Environment Canada than creating and affixing a Stamp to Permits
- Even so, WHC believes there are efficiencies available in producing the Stamp, as demonstrated in Quebec when the production and distribution of their Stamp was contracted to the private sector
- The effectiveness of a simple note on the Permit depends on how the resulting revenue is distributed
- This approach does not allow the creation of additional revenue streams, and does not provide a way for those outside the hunting community to contribute to habitat conservation

Dealing With Environment Canada's Costs

- Many of Environment Canada's costs reflect the cost of doing business for governments – delivering a national program effectively across this country – and should be supported by general revenues and not the proceeds from the Stamp and Permit fees
- Many of the costs reflect the price of dealing with the Canada Post Corporation, and Environment Canada should work to get the best deal possible from Canada Post without sacrificing the broad availability of the Permit (see the announcement about restrictions in this year's distribution of the permit at http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/legislations/per_e.cfm)
- WHC believes the hunting community would be better served through a more cooperative working arrangement between the federal government and the governments of the provinces and territories to establish a common system for easier access to all licences and permits

WHC Is The Best Choice To Manage The Funds

- WHC operates at arm's length from government, but has 5 of twelve Board members appointed by governments, both federal and provincial/territorial
- Other Board members have connections to the hunting community from which most of the funds come, from the philatelic and art collector community, and from the public at large
- All are dedicated to making the most effective use of the funds entrusted to WHC for habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement
- WHC has connections to the conservation NGO community and to the growing land trust community (indeed, WHC helped create the Canadian Land Trust Alliance) but does not compete with these NGOs for funding, even though WHC can and does fund specific projects in cooperation with any of them
- WHC operates in a transparent manner, providing an Annual Report with details of the projects it funds and audited financial statements showing all revenue and expenses
- Because it was created to manage the Habitat Conservation Stamp funds, WHC does not spend money fundraising
- Because it does not fundraise, WHC is not tied down by donor restrictions and expectations (other than those expressed by Environment Canada), allowing it to be more innovative
- Because it is not tied to just one program, such as the *Species at Risk Act* or the North American Waterfowl Management Program, WHC can respond rapidly to habitat conservation opportunities across the Canadian landscape

- WHC is a national voice for habitat conservation and stewardship with a strong record of leadership in habitat conservation and stewardship program development
- Now about \$1 million per year in projects on the ground

Other Delivery Agents

- WHC can and does work with all of the other possible delivery agents already
- Every other NGO has its own particular niche, and providing all of the funding to any one of them would inevitably narrow the range of projects supported
- Because they are working within their own programs that are not solely dedicated to habitat conservation, other NGOs are less free to respond to changing circumstances
- WHC can be more responsive than a government program, without sacrificing accountability, because the “chain of command” is shorter, with only one purpose – to conserve wildlife habitat
- WHC has a track record of innovation, helping create the momentum for stewardship in Canada, and pioneering many conservation and stewardship approaches
- Working through WHC provides a single window of accountability - for Environment Canada and for the hunters who contribute the bulk of the funding each year

Environment Canada’s Habitat Conservation Program

- WHC supports Environment Canada’s habitat conservation programs, including:
 - the Habitat Stewardship Program for protecting the habitat of species at risk;
 - the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), of which WHC was a founding Canadian member and where WHC remains an active participant as a funder and as a board member of several joint ventures;
 - Migratory Bird Sanctuaries; and
 - National Wildlife Areas
- WHC thinks these programs are core government programs that deserve more support
- BUT, we do not think that additional support should come just from waterfowl hunters in Canada – it should be part of the basic funding allocation provided to the Canadian Wildlife Service to enable it to fulfill its mandated role as Canada’s national wildlife agency

What Other Options Should Be Considered?

- The principal option that should be considered is an increase in the base funding provided to the Canadian Wildlife Service to enable it to fulfill its mandated role as Canada’s national wildlife agency, especially in the implementation of the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* for both game and non-game birds
- The hunting community would welcome a more cooperative working arrangement between the federal government and the governments of the provinces and territories to establish a common system for easier access to all licences and permits
- A change in the fee structure for the Habitat Conservation Stamp (such as an increase in price for all waterfowl hunters, or a separate fee structure for non-resident hunters) should be approached with great caution, and only if there is a solid guarantee the funds will be used for conservation purposes

What Can You Do?

- Environment Canada has released a consultation document on the web, so you can make sure they know what you think about the proposed changes – see:
 - English - http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/legislations/tim-st_con/index_e.cfm
 - French - http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/legislations/tim-st_con/index_f.cfm

You can also express your support for the continuation of a long and successful partnership among waterfowl hunters, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and Environment Canada by writing to the Minister, with a copy to your local MP and to Cynthia Wright, Associate ADM, Environmental Stewardship Branch. You can find the most recent information and a copy of a suggested letter on our web site at www.whc.org.

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