

**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
EASTERN HABITAT JOINT VENTURE
COASTAL AND INLAND FRESHWATER WETLANDS**

Project # 1.12U.14-06/07

Final Project Report to Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC)
for fiscal year 2006/2007

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project is a component of the implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) through the programs of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV), Newfoundland and Labrador. The purpose of the five and fifteen year plans of the EHJV in Newfoundland and Labrador is to protect wetlands and waterfowl habitat through stewardship agreements and to carry out enhancement activities within the areas secured through these agreements. The 1998 NAWMP Update highlights the need for grassroots involvement in habitat conservation. It states “Long term success of the Plan will depend on the commitment of local communities to the concept of stewardship, which includes planning, implementation, and care-taking.”

There continues to be loss and degradation of wetlands throughout Canada as a result of industrial, agricultural and residential developments. In Newfoundland and Labrador, a need has been identified to actively engage municipal government in the identification, stewardship and conservation of wetlands located within their jurisdiction. Newfoundland and Labrador communities are responsible for large areas of wetland and watershed. The primary focus of this program is to work with municipal councils, staff and residents to encourage, nurture and reinforce a local responsibility for the stewardship and conservation of their wetlands. The program also aims to protect habitat from adverse development, to enhance eider habitat and to support local stewardship activities.

The overall goals and objectives of this project are to negotiate conservation agreements with both the forest industry and a municipality, to enhance eider nesting habitat, to manage existing NAWMP structures, to influence attitudes and activities through the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program, to provide assistance to the signatories of previous agreements through the Stewardship Extension Program, and to carry out the recon and design, and evaluation component of the “Tailings to Biodiversity Project.”

Activities which have been completed include the negotiation of a municipal conservation agreement, the influence of attitudes and activities through the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program, and the provision of assistance to the signatories of previous agreements through the Stewardship Extension Program.

The Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program increases the profile of wetlands and waterfowl within the municipal planning process. Land/water planning and uses are subject to the terms of the agreement and reinforced through an increase in awareness and sense of responsibility. Important wetlands and associated uplands will be protected from adverse development through designation as protected under the municipal planning process.

It should be noted that acreage is not officially reported until the Minister has signed the stewardship agreements, and due to scheduling conflicts the signings for some of these agreements may be delayed.

2.0 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The project goals and objectives include activities to be carried out under securement, enhancement, management, stewardship, stewardship extension and other functions.

Through a Conservation Agreement, 111.3 hectares (275 acres) of high quality wetlands and associated uplands will be secured with the forest industry within their forest management area. There are vast expanses of commercial forest in Newfoundland and Labrador which contain significant wetland complexes that support a diversity of waterfowl and other wildlife. These areas will be secured through the development of long-term conservation agreements that balance habitat needs with commercial forestry activities.

Through a Conservation Agreement, 202.3 hectares (500 acres) of wetland and other wildlife habitat within the jurisdiction of a municipality will be secured, and another 202.3 hectares (500 acres) will be influenced through the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program.

The installation of nesting structures will enhance 44.5 hectares (110 acres) of eider nesting habitat through the placement of 110 shelters. These improvements on coastal islands will reduce nest depredation by gulls thus enabling a greater number of eiders to successfully complete incubation. This will increase common eider recruitment as well as assist in the development of a conservation ethic in coastal communities associated with this work. Local responsibility for the delivery of this program will promote a sense of resource stewardship in the community.

Existing NAWMP projects (water control structures, eider nest structures and common goldeneye nest boxes) will be inspected and/or maintained resulting in maximum use and efficient operation.

The Stewardship Extension Program will provide assistance to the signatories of the previous agreements in the implementation of their agreements and associated wetland management/conservation plans. The existing agreements account for 30,683 acres secured and 301,353 acres influenced.

The recon and design, and evaluation component of the “Tailings to Biodiversity Project” will determine the feasibility of an innovative, long-term tailings stabilization project that is designed to create a mosaic of mixed upland, riparian and wetland habitat. Field studies and monitoring programs will be implemented to provide data required to support the development and maintenance of the enhanced landform associated with the project. Coordination will ensure consistency with procedures, policies and plans of the EHJV.

3.0 PARTNERS

The following partners provided cash and/or in-kind contributions to the project in 2006/2007:

- Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) (Canadian and U.S. accounts)
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Environment and Conservation)
- Government of Canada (Environment Canada)
- Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC)
- United States Federal Government (via North American Wetland Conservation Act)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU)
- Ducks Unlimited Inc.

4.0 ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

The Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program underwent a North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)/Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) evaluation, entitled “*Municipal Wetlands Stewardship Audit 2003*,” and the authors concluded that it is a powerful and effective strategy for conservation and recommend that all relevant partners give it their strong support. The Newfoundland and Labrador program has been successful in addressing two major issues that were identified at *The Leading Edge: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada 2003* Conference, namely engaging municipal governments and industry in wetland conservation. The Newfoundland and Labrador program follows all the Principals of Canadian Stewardship and adheres to the goals and objectives as outlined in *Canada’s Stewardship Agenda*. The Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program addresses many of the concerns identified in the urban landscape chapter of Wildlife Habitat Canada’s 2001 report entitled “*The Status of Wildlife Habitats in Canada*” by nurturing and reinforcing a stewardship ethic within municipal governments and their residents.

The Newfoundland and Labrador program is a habitat based conservation and protection initiative that partners with municipal governments and industry to promote the stewardship and conservation of important wetland and waterfowl habitats that are located within their jurisdictions. Lessons learned from the municipal program have also provided the model for other initiatives related to coastal habitats and species at risk.

Historically, both coastal and inland settlement has often occurred adjacent to productive wetlands, and municipalities have control over large areas of watershed through the municipal planning process. Many rural communities are experiencing social and economic hardships and may have to choose between conservation and development. In many cases, the wildlife values of wetlands and associated uplands are not being considered. There is a need to identify the productive wetlands and to work with municipalities to ensure their conservation.

Municipal governments are susceptible to being pressured to allow development that could result in the degradation of productive wetlands. The cumulative effect of such development may eventually render these wetlands and associated uplands unsuitable for waterfowl and other wildlife. The Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program increases the profile of wetlands and waterfowl within the municipal planning process. Land/water planning and uses are subject to the terms of the agreement and reinforced through an increase in awareness and sense of responsibility. Important wetlands and associated uplands will be protected from adverse development through designation as protected under the municipal planning process.

Municipal stewardship agreements address the conservation and stewardship of wetland and associated upland within a community's jurisdiction. A municipal conservation agreement secured 210 hectares (519 acres) of wetland and associated upland habitat within the Town of Gander during 2006/2007 (see Appendix 7.2.1), satisfying the commitment made for secured acreage for this fiscal year. A municipal conservation agreement secured 178.5 hectares (441 acres) of wetland and associated upland habitat within the Town of Whitbourne (signed during 2006/2007), and influenced a further 4,451.5 hectares (11,000 acres) (see Appendix 7.2.2). The Whitbourne agreement satisfies the commitments made for the 2004/2005 fiscal year. These areas, along with other locations in which the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) is involved, are shown in figures 1 and 2 in Appendix 7.1. In these figures, the terms "negotiations," "pending" and "signed" are used. "Negotiations" refer to communities that are being approached to become involved in a stewardship program, but have not yet made a firm commitment to signing a stewardship agreement. "Pending" refers to communities that have made a firm commitment to the stewardship program, but the agreement has not been formally signed. "Signed" refers to communities where a stewardship agreement has been formally signed by the local Council and the Minister responsible for the EHJV.

Conservation agreements are an integral part of the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program and are implemented for the purpose of conservation and future enhancement. The activities associated with this report are delivered at a program level which spans many years. Results may not always be identified within the current reporting period. The process by which these stewardship agreements are negotiated can be time-consuming and, at times, complicated. Initially, EHJV holds meetings with the communities and interest groups in the area. If sufficient interest exists, EHJV then develops a stewardship proposal. This is reviewed by the involved groups, and changes are made where deemed appropriate. When the proposal is accepted, the involved groups sign a goodwill stewardship agreement demonstrating their commitment to the conservation of waterfowl habitat. EHJV then commits to developing a management/conservation plan, developed in consultation with the Town Council, residents and interest groups of the area.

Under the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program, field work was carried out in several areas. Two areas in Gander, Whitman's Pond and Peyton's Pond, were visited to ascertain suitability for management unit designation. These two sites were subsequently included in the amended stewardship agreement signed by the Town of Gander in March 2007. Field visits were carried out in Whitbourne for the same purpose and these sites

were subsequently included in the amended stewardship agreement signed by the Town of Whitbourne in May 2006. Site visits were made within the Town of Torbay to the Western Island Pond management unit to address development issues within the area and gauge potential impacts that a proposed upstream fur farm development may have on the area. A site visit was carried out within the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor's stewardship zone as a result of beaver management issues adjacent to the Corduroy Marsh management unit. Field visits to wetlands within Deer Lake, Bauline, Dover, St. John's (Yellow Marsh) and Bishop's Falls were done to determine the suitability of these communities for inclusion in the program. Field work to gather information for conservation plans was carried out in Winterland and in three communities in Labrador - Labrador City, Wabush and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. A draft conservation plan was submitted for review to the towns of Bay Roberts and Spaniard's Bay, work was carried out on a conservation plan for Winterland, and a draft proposal was resubmitted to the Town of Hawke's Bay.

The Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program secures wetlands for conservation through the municipal planning process. Critical wetlands and associated uplands are written into the town plan as protected areas. Other wetlands within the municipal jurisdiction are identified as "influenced" and the town uses their discretion to find the appropriate balance between conservation and the socio-economic requirements of the community. Influenced acres are identified under "stewardship" activity.

The municipal wetland stewardship agreements identify wetlands that are secured as management units, as well as wetlands and associated uplands that are under the jurisdiction of the community that are not secured but may be influenced by stewardship activity. The habitats within these communities include a wide variety of wetland types on which waterfowl depend. The bogs, ponds, marshes, rivers and brooks are used by ducks and geese for staging, nesting and brood rearing. These areas are also utilized for recreational activities such as hunting and fishing by local residents.

EHJV provided comment concerning the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program to planning consultants reviewing the municipal plans for Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Port Saunders, Springdale, Torbay, Labrador City, North River and Spaniard's Bay. Consultants were informed about the commitments made by each town under the program and supporting documentation was submitted for their review including proposals, conservation plans and maps. EHJV staff worked with the consultants to ensure that the agreement was represented in new municipal plans. These documents are used to guide development within municipalities.

In late 2005, the EHJV was approached by the Newfoundland and Labrador Legacy Nature Trust (LNT) about potential involvement in a unique initiative directed towards one of the municipal wetland stewardship communities. A population of rare lichen, *Degelia plumbea*, was found to be flourishing within Sir Robert Bond Park in Whitbourne. This municipal park takes in a portion of shoreline associated with the Junction Pond management unit, a pond known to support populations of breeding waterfowl. In association with the LNT and Salmonier Nature Park, \$15,000 has been

secured from the Shell Environment Fund and Wal-Mart's Evergreen Foundation for lichen educational initiatives in the Whitbourne area. Interpretive signage has been worked on extensively by EHJV staff and will form the cornerstone for awareness within Sir Robert Bond Park. The EHJV, in association with Salmonier Nature Park, has also been instrumental in bringing awareness to Whitbourne residents through the organization of park tours (see Appendix 7.2.3) and through the production of educational posters (see Appendix 7.3.1).

EHJV staff reviewed and provided comment on numerous development applications during the 2006/2007 fiscal year. Under the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program, comments were submitted on residential applications for lands adjacent to a management unit in Grand Falls-Windsor and within the stewardship zone in Whitbourne, a proposed fur farm that had potential to impact a management unit within Torbay, a proposed railway adjacent to management units in Labrador City, a resort development adjacent to a management unit in Springdale, proposed trail and road development in Bay Roberts/Spaniard's Bay, and to a planning consultant doing a flood risk assessment for Channel-Port aux Basques. Comments were submitted on a proposed oil refinery to be located adjacent to the municipal stewardship zone in Come By Chance. Other applications reviewed included those related to cabin and mining developments. EHJV staff also played an active role in forestry management planning sessions and determining Sensitive Wildlife Areas for Waterfowl in the province. EHJV staff met with Newfoundland Power personnel in Stephenville Crossing to discuss relocation of a transmission line within that stewardship zone.

DU did not secure any high quality wetlands and associated uplands through a conservation agreement with the forest industry during 2006/2007. The nature of DU's five year contract allows the fulfillment of obligations under a particular proposal to be carried over the life of the agreement. The EHJV will provide further information on these activities as it becomes available. When completed, the agreement will balance the habitat needs with the commercial forestry activities.

A total of 85.8 hectares (212 acres) of eider habitat on coastal islands were enhanced by DU through the placement of 212 nesting structures along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. These sites were located at Table Bay (100), Burgeo (62), Plum Point (30) and Cartwright (20). These nesting structures allow for a greater number of eiders to successfully complete incubation by reducing depredation by gulls. Local responsibility for the program has promoted a sense of resource stewardship in these areas. The nature of DU's five year contract allows the fulfillment of obligations under a particular proposal to be carried over the life of the agreement. The EHJV will provide further information on these activities as it becomes available.

Management activities provided for the maintenance and operation of existing structures (water control structures, eider nest structures and common goldeneye nest boxes) that enhance an existing 2,755.1 hectares (6,808 acres) of wetlands and associated uplands. DU's wetland management activities focused on the repair and internal operation of existing wetland projects, and included minor repairs, inspections and cleaning out

beaver debris. These activities are essential to the long-term viability of existing projects, and result in maximum use and efficient operation. In addition, internal operations such as alteration of water levels ensure that waterfowl productivity is maintained for the life of the project.

EHJV staff assisted the DU Teams on the Grey Islands and in Table Bay capturing eiders for banding under the Eider Initiative (see Appendix 7.2.4). This was a cooperative effort which allowed EHJV staff to educate team members about the Coastal Stewardship Program, in turn allowing the team to pass that information on to others.

Field work carried out under maintenance and monitoring included three key components. EHJV staff spent time with DU personnel to inspect existing NAWMP projects, specifically water control structures located in central Newfoundland. Sites where beaver levelers have been deployed were inspected and maintained as necessary. Beaver pond enhancement sites on the Avalon Peninsula were inspected and maintained as necessary.

The recon and design, and evaluation component of the “Tailings to Biodiversity Project” has not yet been completed. A conceptual engineering design required for the implementation of the project has not yet been completed. Once completed, this adaptive approach to design will allow for each stage to be constructed using achieved results and lessons learned from the previous work completed to ensure maximum ecological benefits are achieved. Field studies and monitoring programs have begun to be implemented to provide data required to support the development and maintenance of the enhanced landform associated with this project. This included an experimental small mammal relocation effort to address the lack of small mammals inhabiting the tailings site. Further information concerning this project will be submitted as it becomes available.

The Stewardship Extension Program continues to be carried out on an ongoing basis, and provides for the continued reinforcement of the stewardship concept with the signatories of previous stewardship agreements. These agreements are in place for 30 years and involve municipalities, corporations and landowners, and account for 30,683 acres secured and 301,353 acres influenced. EHJV staff is mandated to manage/monitor these areas under the stewardship program. Professional biological and habitat advice and direction will be provided to assist the signatories in fulfilling the terms of their agreements and the implementation of their wetland management/conservation plans. A general presence is maintained when possible through field work and working with groups carrying out habitat enhancement activities. Meetings are held frequently with Councils, community groups, individuals and other stakeholders. Recommendations from the evaluation (audit) of the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program in Newfoundland and Labrador that was completed in 2003 are being implemented. Environment-related functions are attended when they allow for the opportunity to highlight wetland stewardship initiatives in the province. People involved in new stewardship initiatives in the province look to EHJV for advice and assistance, and the media becomes more interested in stewardship initiatives as these programs become more well-known across

Newfoundland and Labrador. General office administration related to communication with stewardship communities occurs daily with phone calls, emails, letters and requests for information. SAM meetings were held in Gander and Springdale during 2006/2007 (see Appendices 7.2.5 and 7.2.6). Several other meetings and events were attended which provided opportunity for furthering awareness and support for the provincial stewardship program.

Significant time and effort goes into stewardship extension activities. A relationship exists between the communities and EHJV that is significant in terms of communication, support, and a willingness to see the stewardship ethic promoted and accepted within these municipalities and the province as a whole. EHJV also partners with many other agencies on a yearly basis to promote stewardship and conservation within the province. During 2006/2007 they included:

- Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Environment and Conservation (Wildlife Division)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Environment and Conservation (Salmonier Nature Park)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources
- Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU)
- Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC)
- Legacy Nature Trust (LNT)
- Ducks Unlimited Inc. (DU Inc.)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
- Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)
- Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF)
- Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC)
- Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Ltd. (CBPPL)
- Abitibi-Consolidated Inc.
- Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM)
- Winterland Heritage Development Committee (WHDC)
- Bay Roberts/Spaniard's Bay Joint Management Committee
- Carmanville Habitat Committee (CHC)
- Torbay Environment and Trails Committee (TETC)
- Rocky Barachois Pioneer Preservers (RBPP)
- Springdale Wetlands Committee (SWC)
- Stephenville Crossing Environmental Conservation Committee (SCECC)
- Torbay Gully Project
- Newfoundland T' Railway Council
- Ocean Net
- Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association (CBEA)
- Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador (CCNL)

- Codroy Valley Development Association (CVDA)
- City of St. John's
- Community of Conne River
- Community of Markland
- Town of Bay Roberts
- Town of Burgeo
- Town of Carmanville
- Town of Cartwright
- Town of Channel-Port aux Basques
- Town of Come By Chance
- Town of Gambo
- Town of Gander
- Town of Grand Falls-Windsor
- Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Town of Hawke's Bay
- Town of Labrador City
- Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove
- Town of Main Brook
- Town of Mary's Harbour
- Town of Milltown-Head of Bay d'Espoir
- Town of Red Bay
- Town of Spaniard's Bay
- Town of Springdale
- Town of St. Alban's
- Town of St. Anthony
- Town of St. Lewis
- Town of St. Paul's
- Town of Stephenville Crossing
- Town of Torbay
- Town of Wabush
- Town of Whitbourne
- Town of Winterland

Other activities were carried out during the 2006/2007 fiscal year. The EHJV is in negotiations with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro for a Corporate Stewardship Agreement in the Bay d'Espoir area that would ensure sound management for waterfowl within portions of their operating area known to support the highest densities of breeding Canada geese in Newfoundland. A section of the area in question is located adjacent to the Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve, and also includes a deltaic area that supports a myriad of avian species. An updated proposal has been submitted for review by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. Site visits were made to areas managed by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to gather information for the conservation plan that will be required with the signing of a corporate stewardship agreement.

The Province also looks to EHJV for advice on proposals that may affect wetlands including cabin, trail, residential and commercial development applications. This includes site visits when necessary. Numerous development applications were reviewed and commented on during the 2006/2007 fiscal year that were located outside of municipal stewardship zones. They included a proposed oil refinery to be located adjacent to the municipal stewardship zone in Come By Chance. Other applications reviewed included those related to cabin and mining developments. EHJV staff also played an active role in forestry management planning sessions and determining boundaries for and implementation of Sensitive Wildlife Areas for Waterfowl in the province.

A wetland workshop was organized by EHJV staff for SAM members (extended to Department of Environment and Conservation staff as well) to facilitate an understanding of wetland interpretation within the province. This workshop focused on the classification and identification of major morphological peatland types, as well as developmental processes and ecological/phytosociological parameters that characterize wetlands in Newfoundland and Labrador. The workshop increased wetland awareness among 20 participants and included field trips and aerial photograph interpretation (see Appendix 7.2.7).

EHJV staff took part in the provincial trapping education course which provided opportunity to gain insight into furbearer management, the social issues surrounding trapping, as well as techniques of trapping, enabling better dialogue with and more understanding of trappers that we work with from time to time, particularly relating to waterfowl management and wetland stewardship and conservation.

EHJV staff attended the *Biodiversity Workshop for Environmental Farm Plan Practitioners and Extension Workers* in Moncton, New Brunswick. Efforts are underway to organize a waterfowl banding and shorebird interpretation workshop for the Codroy Valley with CWS personnel. EHJV collaborated with the CCNL to explore involvement in their Green Team (2007) programs for the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Burgeo. EHJV staff consulted with the Bay Roberts Green Team (2006) on erection of osprey nesting platforms. An EcoAction funding proposal was prepared and submitted for a common goldeneye nest box program to be implemented within the communities of Gander, Carmanville, Whitbourne, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Wabush and Labrador City.

EHJV staff worked with Department of Environment and Conservation GIS personnel on a provincial watershed mapping project and mapping of municipal stewardship zones and management units.

The project provides several benefits to habitat. Under the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program, the towns have committed to protecting wetlands identified as critical habitat for waterfowl from development that would negatively impact those wetlands. Any type of development proposed for these areas is subject to a 30 day review period by the Wildlife Division. The towns also commit to maintaining other areas of wetland habitat within their stewardship zone. Policy decisions within these towns will be

made with a focus on maintaining the integrity of these areas which the towns themselves have deemed important. Protecting these areas not only protects waterfowl, but other wetland associated species of wildlife and plants. Residents will be educated about the effects that their activities as individuals can have on wetlands and other waterfowl habitat. The habitat conservation message is reinforced through relationships, such as meetings and face-to-face contact, with EHJV staff and SAM. Support and advice is provided to the municipalities on development proposals, and a conservation/management plan specific to the wetlands and associated uplands identified within the agreement will be developed to assist the municipality in complying with the terms of the agreement. Securement achieved by conservation agreements and easements will remain in effect for a period of 10-30 years after which landowners will be encouraged to renew their agreements.

The nature of human settlement in Newfoundland and Labrador has resulted in many municipalities being associated with what has also been identified as prime waterfowl habitats. Under the Municipalities Act, municipal governments are given the primary responsibility to manage and control development within their jurisdictional boundaries, and have jurisdiction over large areas of watershed. Much development can take place without triggering the environmental review process. Developments with a footprint less than 10 hectares are normally not required to undergo an environmental assessment. Development on crown lands within municipal boundaries may be subject to interdepartmental review, however, it could proceed in spite of concerns being expressed by some Departments. Drinking water and flood control have been the primary reasons for wetland conservation, however wildlife values and sustaining biodiversity are usually not addressed. Involvement by the municipal governments in the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program will influence their planning and decision making related to proposed development adjacent to or within wetlands. This will impact any individuals or agencies that have plans to develop within the town's jurisdiction. The program also encourages developers to consider options to reduce impact on sensitive wetland areas where development may be beyond the town's control.

Cooperating with industry has resulted in major contributions to wetland conservation and stewardship. CBPPL identifies both Cook's Marsh (see Appendix 7.2.8) and the Upper Humber Wetlands Complex as special places, and benefits from enhancement activities are expected for 10-20 years. IOC supports the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program in Labrador West and manages its tailing sites as part of a biodiversity project that is serving as a good example to the rest of the mining industry. The "Tailings to Biodiversity Project" is designed to reduce siltation and maximize biodiversity, and will continuously produce new habitat for the lifespan of the mine, the benefits of which will remain for perpetuity. Corporate agreements also increase the profile of habitat conservation groups and provincial wetland conservation in general.

Some of the most productive migratory bird and other wildlife habitats in the province will be protected from conflicting resource use through long-term stewardship and conservation agreements. These habitats are important for waterfowl species such as black duck, ring-necked duck, green-winged teal, Canada goose, common goldeneye and

common eider, and for a diverse number of colonial nesting seabirds and migrating shorebirds such as greater yellowlegs, common snipe, willet, sandpipers and plovers. Endangered species such as the piping plover, vulnerable species such as the harlequin duck and Caspian tern, and species of special concern such as the banded killifish also depend on wetland habitat. A variety of raptors including bald eagle, osprey and harriers will directly benefit from this project. Other animals such as passerines, Atlantic salmon, mammals and invertebrates also depend on or are associated with wetlands. The authors of a recent audit of the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program concluded that “Municipal Wetland Stewardship is a powerful and effective strategy for conservation.” Support and assistance provided to landowners and/or administrators holding current stewardship agreements will reinforce their commitment to the concept and practice of effective stewardship. The conservation agreement component of the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program will identify critical wetland habitat as management units to be given protection from development under the municipal planning process. The stewardship program will promote and reinforce local ownership, responsibility and pride in conservation and enhancement activities, and will ensure that long-term benefits are maintained. Stewardship is also not limited by species and boundaries so these activities will influence municipal councils’ decision making throughout their jurisdiction and will therefore benefit habitats of concern for all bird species. These agreements will also provide securement for future enhancement activities within these areas which will provide exposure to and increase public awareness of wetland values and functions, while providing increased opportunities for recreational activities such as wilderness hiking and bird-watching.

The delivery of eider nesting structures will reduce nest depredation by gulls by enabling a greater number of eiders to successfully complete incubation. Local responsibility for the delivery of this program will promote a sense of resource stewardship in the community. DU’s wetland management activities focused on the repair and internal operation of existing wetland projects. These activities are essential to the long-term viability of existing projects. In addition, internal operations such as alteration of water levels ensure that waterfowl productivity is maintained for the life of the project.

NAWMP activities in Newfoundland and Labrador have also been instrumental in engaging municipal government in wetland stewardship. The stewardship program models that have been developed are now being used as models for new stewardship activities related to the conservation of species at risk. In areas of mutual interest, new partnerships are being forged to ensure efficient and complementary delivery of wetland and species at risk conservation programs.

This project is relevant to conservation issues on a local, provincial, national and international scale. Locally, communities have protected and/or enhanced wetlands that are within their area of jurisdiction, ensuring that local waterfowl populations remain healthy. Provincially, the program is ensuring that a diverse representation of wetlands and other waterfowl habitat are being protected from conflicting resource use through long-term stewardship and conservation initiatives. Animals such as shorebirds, waders, raptors, passerines, fish, mammals and invertebrates depend on or are associated with

wetlands. Nationally and internationally, provincial programs also complement the principles of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, Black Duck Joint Venture, Sea Duck Joint Venture and DU's Eider Initiative.

There are a number of reasons why agreements may not be met within the funding window under which it was originally proposed. Many of the communities in which we work have Councils that do not meet on a regular basis, and many of them have a high rate of turnover in the people sitting on the Council. Weather, especially Labrador winters, can play havoc with schedules. Many times, it may be weeks and months before all parties can get together again for a meeting or stewardship agreement signing ceremony. It also takes significant time in many instances to develop a trust relationship with the communities in which we are working. One or two vocal people within a town that speak out against the program, most often with serious misconceptions, can set the program back for an indefinite period. All these factors may lead to some of the programs being rolled over into following funding windows, however commitments made under each proposal are being met.

5.0 COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

The project results will be communicated in many ways right from a local to an international level.

The program receives coverage from media including television, radio and newspaper. Brochures and other written material are displayed at functions such as open houses and public meetings. Posters about the Coastal Habitat and Municipal Wetland Stewardship Programs, as well as SAM, have been developed. The provincial government also provides news releases to the general public when accomplishments are made under the EHJV program. Several meetings and presentations have been held in various communities to help spread the stewardship message. Displays were put up at various functions throughout the year. Preliminary discussions were held to explore the possibility of holding a regional stewardship workshop in southern Labrador. A general EHJV presentation was delivered to the Humber Natural History Society (HNHS) at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook. These brochures, posters and the HNHS presentation were appended to previous reports.

During 2006/2007 specifically, within the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program, many stewardship extension activities took place. Negotiations were carried out with the Town of Whitbourne concerning an expansion of their stewardship zone and management units. An amended municipal wetland stewardship agreement, which included nine new management units and an extension of the stewardship zone, was signed by the Town's Mayor and the Minister of Environment and Conservation in May 2006. Also, EHJV is using the program to raise awareness of rare lichens that occur adjacent to one of the new management units which has resulted in the development of interpretive signage, posters and educational tours. EHJV staff organized and attended, in cooperation with the LNT and the Salmonier Nature Park, a lichen tour for Council and

community members. Negotiations were carried out with the Town of Gander concerning an expansion of their stewardship zone and management units. These negotiations included meetings with municipal representatives and an Open House and presentation to provide opportunity for community residents to review the proposed agreement amendments (see Appendix 7.3.2). An amended municipal wetland stewardship agreement, which included two new management units and an extension of the stewardship zone, was signed by the Town's Mayor and the Minister of Environment and Conservation in March 2007. Several presentations related to the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program were given to Town Councils along with meetings with Town Planners, Town Clerks and community/committee representatives. These towns included Come By Chance, Winterland (see Appendix 7.3.3), Markland, Bishop's Falls (see Appendix 7.3.4), Milltown-Head of Bay d'Espoir, St. Alban's, Conne River, Reidville, Sunnyside, Torbay, Dover, Bauline, Deer Lake, St. John's, Happy Valley-Goose Bay (see Appendix 7.3.5), Wabush and Labrador City. The latter three communities are located in Labrador. Many of these presentations were necessary as a result of changeover in Councils due to fall 2005 municipal elections. EHJV worked with the Town of Carmanville on a proposal to redesignate the Middle Arm stewardship zone to a management unit. EHJV also worked with the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and local Conservation Officers toward expanding their stewardship zone and management units to include additional high quality waterfowl habitat within the community. EHJV staff attended the *Valuing Nature: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada 2006* Conference in Corner Brook where an information booth was set up and manned (see Appendix 7.2.9), providing opportunity to highlight EHJV activities within Newfoundland and Labrador to individuals from across Canada. A video was done and shown at the opening session of the Conference, entitled "*Legacy of Stewardship.*" This video highlighted the EHJV program in Newfoundland and Labrador to a varied audience representing the Canadian stewardship and conservation movement. EHJV staff took part in EnviroFest activities in Gander (see Appendix 7.2.10) and Winterland, which is an environmental awareness initiative of Newfoundland Power, as well as an environmental Open House at Holy Trinity High School in Torbay organized by the TETC. An information booth was set up and manned for National Wildlife Week 2006 in St. John's, and plans were put in place for National Wildlife Week 2007 activities in Corner Brook. EHJV staff delivered waterfowl/watershed focused presentations to schools (see Appendix 7.2.11) and Backyard Habitat Workshops (see Appendix 7.3.6) in seven communities during the same period. A wetland oriented presentation was given to grade seven and eight students at St. Michael's Elementary, Stephenville Crossing (see Appendix 7.3.7). Interviews were given with CBC Radio and a local newspaper, *The Beacon*, concerning the expansion of the Town of Gander's municipal stewardship zone and management units (see Appendix 7.3.8), and the Department of Environment and Conservation highlighted the event in a news release (see Appendix 7.3.9) on the provincial government's website (www.gov.nl.ca). This event was also covered in *The Telegram*, Newfoundland and Labrador's largest daily newspaper. An interview with CBC Radio concerning the Municipal Wetland Stewardship Program in western Labrador was done. EHJV staff participated in a Public Awareness Forum at the high school in Bay Roberts/Spaniard's Bay that was organized by the local environmentally focused Joint Management Committee which raised awareness about wetland stewardship and

conservation issues. EHJV delivered a PowerPoint presentation to those in attendance, and an interview with CBC radio was done for the same. A revision of the Bay Roberts/Spaniard's Bay educational booklet entitled "*The Shearstown Estuary – Where the River meets the Sea*" was completed (see Appendix 7.3.10). In the community of Channel-Port aux Basques, the local newspaper *The Gulf News* provided coverage of the stewardship program and delivery of the new municipal stewardship signs (see Appendix 7.3.11). Materials for World Wetlands Day 2007 were gathered and distributed. EHJV collaborated with the CCNL to explore involvement in their Green Team programs for the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Burgeo during the summer of 2007. EHJV staff consulted with the 2006 Bay Roberts Green Team on erection of osprey nesting platforms. Interpretation panels for Spaniard's Bay and Bay Roberts, developed during the 2005/2006 fiscal year, are attached (see Appendix 7.3.12).

Under the Coastal Stewardship Program, presentations were delivered to the communities of Main Brook (Hare Bay) and St. Lewis (St. Peter's Bay, Labrador). These presentations were necessary as a result of changeover in Councils due to fall 2005 municipal elections. A presentation on the Coastal Stewardship Program was delivered to the Town of Burgeo (see Appendix 7.3.13). Council subsequently offered their support for the program, and a public awareness campaign was initiated. The first opportunity for this campaign was the invitation to deliver a presentation to be aired on the local community television station. The second opportunity, which is upcoming, is the Earth Day 2007 festivities that are being organized by an environmental group in the community. Correspondence was initiated by the Town of Charlottetown requesting EHJV to look into that community's suitability for involvement in the Coastal Stewardship Program.

The EHJV attended both SAM meetings that took place in 2006/2007, located in Gander and Springdale. EHJV programs and related activities are discussed and highlighted at every SAM meeting. EHJV had been acting in a secretarial role for SAM for the last few years, however this position has been relinquished with the election of a new secretary at the fall 2006 meeting. EHJV staff has taken an active role in these meetings by presenting individual reports, initiating conversation concerning issues of importance and by meeting with community officials throughout the weekend. SAM continues to take on an increasingly active role in provincial issues related to wetland and waterfowl conservation. Many of the towns involved in SAM have used the stewardship program as a catalyst for developing infrastructure such as interpretive signage and trail systems, wetland interpretation centres and viewing platforms. The program has brought significant monies into these communities (both actual and in-kind). There has been a noticeable socio-economic relationship between the program and the community. These figures continue to be entered into the National Tracking System, and up to the end of the 2005/2006 fiscal year, has amounted to approximately 1.6 million dollars in complementary Canadian contribution.

Each community has signs which are prominently displayed at main entrance points to the town. Prominent highway signs (6'x8') are erected at the entrances to stewardship communities which identifies that these towns are committed to wetland conservation. As new towns become involved, these signs are delivered. The logos of all partners are

displayed on the signs. In 2006/2007, new stewardship signs were presented to the Towns of Whitbourne, Gander, Torbay, Come By Chance, Bay Roberts, Spaniard's Bay (see Appendix 7.2.12), Grand Falls-Windsor (see Appendix 7.2.13), Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador City and Wabush. Development of management unit signage for these communities has begun.

WaterScapes, a wetland-related curriculum continues to be used in schools in some stewardship communities, as well as by IOC for school field trips and classroom activities. An update to the *Waterscapes* wetland education module is being considered, with a financial commitment secured with IOC to cover the cost of any future updates. The Wildlife Division uses the curriculum in conjunction with Project WILD at interpreter training workshops, and also avails of it when doing Backyard Habitat workshops. Facilitators of these workshops encourage trainees to use the *WaterScapes* curriculum whenever possible. The curriculum was launched on World Wetlands Day (2 February) 2001 and is targeted towards grades four to eight.

The EHJV program is highlighted in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's website (http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/specialplaces/steward_zones.htm). Efforts are ongoing to improve the format of this website to make it more interesting and interactive, with more information, links to other stewardship websites and better recognition of partners. Some municipalities, such as Stephenville Crossing and Torbay, have highlighted their involvement in the wetland stewardship program on their websites. Local success and achievements will be highlighted on the *stewardshipcanada.ca* web portal with increased use of the Newfoundland and Labrador hub.

WHC's contribution to the program is acknowledged/recognized in several ways. The WHC logo and/or title is included in signage, presentations, displays and media coverage (some local media, however, tend to edit news releases significantly). A common question asked when presenting this program is who backs EHJV, and where funding for the program comes from. This provides us with an excellent opportunity to highlight all partners, including WHC.

Contractor activities are detailed in Appendix 7.3.14.

6.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following partners provided cash and/or in-kind contributions to the project in 2006/2007:

- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Environment and Conservation)
- Government of Canada (Environment Canada)
- Wildlife Habitat Canada (Canadian and U.S. accounts)
- Iron Ore Company of Canada
- United States Federal Government (via North American Wetland Conservation Act)
- Ducks Unlimited Inc.

- Shell Environment Fund
- Wal-Mart's Evergreen Foundation

Financial information is included in Appendix 7.4.

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Map and Description of Project Locations

7.2 Project Images

7.3 Sample of Project Communications

7.4 Financial Summary

7.5 CD