



NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS' WORKSHOP ON WILDLIFE HABITATS

FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL

WILDLIFE MEETING - 2002

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY, SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK

May 15, 2002

**Organized on behalf of the NGO Community by:
Wildlife Habitat Canada; Canadian Wildlife Federation; Canadian Wildlife Service,
Atlantic Region**

*Highlights and conclusions compiled by:
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Acknowledgements

The care and management of wildlife habitats throughout Canada are enormous tasks. Our success in sustaining wildlife habitats and the species that rely upon them will greatly depend on the cooperation between government and non-government bodies. This NGO day is one important venue to further foster cooperation on discussing issues and delivering timely results.

In planning and organizing this NGO workshop, we have had wonderful support from our colleagues both within and outside governments. During the work sessions, the same spirit of cooperation was present and a lot of positive energy was directed towards the spaces that are of common concern to all of us – wildlife habitats.

Canada is a huge area. Cooperation amongst non-government and government groups is essential. Cooperation is not just a convenient word. Whether we successfully sustain the life support systems of wildlife species is a function of still working within the bounds of the traditional interests of the wildlife community. However, increasingly we need to look beyond these more familiar areas, and assess and plan for wildlife conservation in much broader context. We need to critically look at the landscape, seascape and ecological foundations of habitat conservation. This will involve natural and human modified areas, resource protection and harvesting, current day and future priorities, domestic and international habitat connections, local stewardship actions and federal/provincial/territorial strategies, biophysical habitat inventories and indicators, research and education, and so on. Now, the business of wildlife habitat conservation is more demanding and inclusive than before. It simply demands a more inclusive and comprehensive approach, and this can only be done through partnerships and mechanisms that foster these activities such as the NGO Day.



We would like to offer our special thanks to our colleagues in the NGO community and to the staff of the various federal, provincial and territorial governments. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the staff in the Canadian Wildlife Service Office, Sackville. They were very generous in their efforts in arranging for the facilities and engaging local NGOs.

Jean Cinq-Mars / Sandy Baumgartner

Wildlife Habitat Forum - Agenda

May 15, 2002

8:30 a.m. – Plenary Session

8:30 a.m. - Introductions (Jean Cinq-Mars)

8:45 a.m. - Habitat issues and concerns (Ed Wiken)

9:00 a.m. - Group Issue Sessions

9:00 a.m. - Introduction on:

- Communicating a habitat message (Sandy Burnett)
- Conserving marine and coastal areas (Jon Lien)
- Managing habitats on public lands (Steve Curtis)
- Improving the governance of habitats (Doug Wolthausen)

9:20 a.m. - Explore scope of issues in groups

10:00 a.m. - Coffee Break

10:30 a.m. - Explore scope of issues in groups (continued)

12:00 p.m. - Lunch

1:00 p.m. - Group Issue Sessions (continued)

1:00 p.m. - Examine opportunities for cooperation and recommendations

2:45 p.m. - Coffee Break

3:10 p.m. - Plenary Session

3:10 p.m. - Highlights from Group Issue Sessions (10-15 minutes each)

4:00 p.m. - Synthesis/Panel Discussion:

- Value of highlights from an Atlantic region perspective (Mark Gloutney)
- Value of highlights from a Canada wide perspective (Jean Cinq-Mars)
- Value of highlights from a North American perspective (Jürgen Hoth/Ed Wiken)

4:30 p.m. – Concluding Remarks (Sandy Baumgartner)

Federal/Provincial/Territorial Wildlife Meeting – NGO Day

8:30-9:00	Plenary- Key note (Jean Cinq-Mars/E. Wiken)					
9:00-12:00	Breadth of Topics	Group Discussion	Communications <i>(Sandy Burnett)</i>	Marine Areas <i>(J. Lien)</i>	Public Lands <i>(Steve Curtis)</i>	Governance <i>(Doug Wolthausen)</i>
12:00-1:00	<i>Lunch</i>					
1:00-2:00	Opportunities	Group Discussion	Communications	Marine Areas	Public Lands	Governance
2:30-4:00	Plenary – Group Summaries					
4:00-4:30	<i>Conclusions</i>	Atlantic Region <i>(Mark Gloutney)</i>	Canada <i>(Jean Cinq-Mars)</i>	International <i>(Jurgen Hoth / Ed Wiken)</i>		

Introduction

Budget cuts, shifts in priorities, and an ever-increasing number of environmental issues such as fragmentation, pollution and others continue to affect Canada's habitats and wildlife. Added to this, is the limited resources that conservation agencies and organizations have to compete for. This obviously creates competition between agencies instead of cooperation. Bringing NGOs together can help to improve collaboration among organizations and agencies working towards similar objectives.

In the last several years, sessions that bring together NGOs to discuss themes related to wildlife habitats have been few. Considering that threats on wildlife such as habitat fragmentation and climate change are constantly increasing, that species at risk are more numerous, and that competition for resource use is more ardent, there is a need for increased discussion among NGOs and levels of government. Together they need to define the habitat conservation priorities of the present and the future.

The annual Federal/provincial and territorial wildlife meeting provides a good opportunity for a forum where views apart from those of governments are discussed. A year ago, Wildlife Habitat Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation were given the role of organizing a working session on wildlife habitats as part of the bigger 2002 wildlife meeting. This year, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Wildlife meeting took place May 13-17 in Sackville, New Brunswick. On May 15, in conjunction with the meeting, a special workshop was organized by and on behalf of non-government organizations (NGOs) around four main themes:

1. Communicating a Habitat Message
2. Conserving Marine and Coastal Habitats
3. Managing Habitats on Public Lands
4. Improving the Governance of Habitats

These themes were chosen by the organizing committee. They represent some of the key issues and perhaps most effective ways to involve various levels of government and non-government sectors towards the common goal of wildlife conservation. The purpose of this forum was to foster a constructive exchange of views on various facets of selected themes involving government and non-government people.

The one-day workshop had the participation of about 50 individuals representing NGOs, and government agencies. At the beginning of the day, each of the participants was invited to sign up for one of the four sessions based on the noted themes. Members of each discussion group were asked to explore their theme and, by the end of the session, to propose two recommendations that could contribute substantially to the effectiveness of wildlife habitat conservation in Canada.

The theme of each session was introduced by a speaker. This person provided some background information and set the context for the group discussions. The facilitators encouraged discussion on their theme and helped to maintain a balance and representativity in the discussions. The aim to look at opportunities and ways to address issues, and to identify 2 recommendations. In addition, a rapporteur recorded the main points of the discussion and summarized them.

Themes of the Wildlife Habitat Workshop

Habitat was selected as a theme for this year's session. We have collectively seen the results of both:

- habitat degradation (much of it historical, much of it still affecting extensive parts of the landscape and seascape, much of it be devastating to unique and critical areas; much of it being linked to within and outside of Canada); and
- habitat enhancement (much of it being local sites and regional actions, much of it in southern Canada, much of it on private lands, much of related to selected species) on wildlife species.

Our endeavours concerning habitat conservation must cover a range of important activities all of which are required for successful outcomes.

Communicating a habitat message. Habitats are the basic life support systems for wildlife but has that message been clearly articulated to Canadians and others? How well is the notion of habitat understood by land managers and stewards such as farmers, ranchers, loggers and fishermen? How well do the separate government departments understand the concept, and do they reflect this in any of their information gathering, research and operational activities?

Recognizing important marine habitats: We have been more successful in drawing attention to the nation's landscapes and their diverse habitat types – the prairies, the forests, the arctic, the wetlands, the Great lakes, etc. This has included work of natural and human modified areas and many aspects about local and continental landscape ties and connections. With the oceans and coasts we have been less successful and these areas represent the other third of Canada's territorial jurisdiction that is typical out of site and out of mind. How are these habitats going to be managed effectively and what partnerships are needed to respect the diversity of interests?

Managing public lands: Public lands are vast areas that serve as habitats across Canada -- the arctic, forests and community pasturelands are examples of habitats that remain in natural and semi-natural conditions. These are areas where the fundamental public commitments are made to land and water stewardship. These areas are envied around the world. How do we foster and promote policies that advance habitat conservation? How can actions be taken to ensure the quality in efforts and the sharing of successful practices?

Governance: Governance is about what people want to do and achieve. The nation's lands and waters (freshwaters/salt waters) are managed by a host of individuals and agencies. Individuals, companies, governments, non-government groups, First nations, and even foreign countries/companies all have responsibilities to manage and care for habitats. Responsibilities may overlap geographically, may be distinctive by theme (climate, soils, land planning, wildlife), may vary by function (research, operations, monitoring) or may vary according to mandates and acts. How are all of these valued contributions to understanding and managing habitats brought together more effectively for our clients -- wildlife?

Communicating important messages, recognizing important habitats, fostering quality based stewardship and facilitating effective governance are all key items. If activities and roles like these are not linked well strategically and across varied groups (NGOs, Governments, industry, jurisdictions), then there will be ‘death from a 1000 silos’ ---individual groups achieving results vertically on traditional goals but lagging drastically on sharing their capabilities horizontally. Habitat conservation and achievements require, if not demand, far greater horizontal integration. There is no one silo with core ‘habitat’ responsibilities and conservation need requires linking and connecting activities.

Group Discussions on Themes

Group Discussion # 1: Communicating a Habitat Message

Habitats are the basic life support systems for wildlife. How clearly has that message been articulated to Canadians and others? How well is habitat understood by land managers and stewards such as farmers, ranchers, loggers or fishermen? How well do government departments understand the concept and do they reflect it in their activities?

A wide-ranging conversation about habitat messages and the target audiences to whom they should be addressed focused eventually on the issue of municipal responsibility for habitat. Across Canada, municipalities occupy a role of increasing importance in the stewardship and protection of wildlife habitat. This is especially true when amalgamations incorporate large expanses of rural land within the boundaries of communities whose focus was formerly urban. Such changes have occurred in Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax, to name three recent metropolitan examples. Rural municipalities, with fewer people and resources, often have jurisdiction over even larger territories.

Acknowledging this trend and acting to link municipalities with the traditional wildlife conservation community of federal, provincial, and non-government agencies is a timely response to an important opportunity for cooperation. By embracing the concept of healthy habitats as indicators of the quality of life, municipal governments can demonstrate their environmental achievements to their constituents and to each other, whether in parks and recreational green spaces, brown-field restoration projects, or newly acquired rural lands.

Group Discussion # 2: Conserving Marine and Coastal Habitats

Canada’s terrestrial landscapes and habitat types — prairie, forest, tundra, wetlands, etc. — are relatively well known and understood. On the other hand, marine and coastal ecosystems, although they represent fully one-third of the area under Canada’s territorial jurisdiction, are the least known among habitat types. While there are more than 90 different categories of conservation regime in place for protected terrestrial areas, comparable frameworks for the protection of marine areas are almost negligible.

Participants in this discussion group noted that any national commitment to conservation of the full range of biodiversity will remain incomplete until it acknowledges the role and importance

of marine and coastal ecosystems. They cited Canada's Oceans Act as an exemplary framework for promoting a better understanding of oceans, marine resources and marine ecosystems and for fostering the sustainable development of the oceans and their resources through conservation based on an ecosystem approach. At the same time, they lamented the fact that little action has been taken to fund or implement this legislation since it received Royal Assent on December 18, 1996. Climatic change, with effects such as rising sea levels and the thinning of Arctic ice, adds a special sense of urgency to issues surrounding the protection and management of marine and coastal ecosystems.

Group Discussion # 3: Managing Habitat on Public Lands

Vast areas of wildlife across Canada fall within the category of "public lands" — that is, areas that are vested in the Crown and have not been reserved for particular, specialized purposes. In contrast, some 15% of Canada's land area is privately owned and administered, whether by individuals, corporations, or, in some cases, governments. Between these two categories there is a third, a "hybrid," exemplified by areas that are publicly owned but licensed to private interests for purposes of stewardship, management, and economic exploitation.

The discussion group expressed some concern that although there is a demonstrable need, nationwide, to conserve biodiversity across the full array of land-holdings — public, private, and "hybrid" — the response to this need is inconsistent. The challenge is to find ways to state goals on a broad national scale but to deliver results on a regional scale that will be responsive to practical realities. Forest certification programs were cited as useful tools for achieving this balance in one major habitat type, whether on private or public lands. Comparable standards may need to be developed for other landscape or habitat types.

Group Discussion # 4: Improving the Governance of Habitats

Canada's lands and waters are managed by a host of different entities. Individuals, companies, all levels of government, non-government groups, First Nations, and even foreign countries and corporations have responsibilities for the management and care of some habitats. These responsibilities may overlap geographically, may be distinguished by theme, and may vary by function or in accordance with laws and regulations. The question posed to the discussion group was how all these valued contributions to the understanding and management of habitats can be coordinated more effectively in the interests of wildlife.

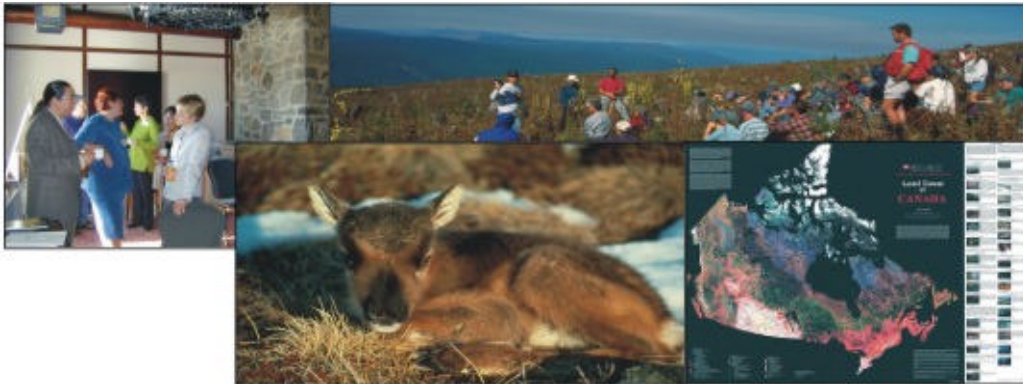
The group acknowledged that the scope and scale of the question was immense but noted that a number of constructive and useful working models have already been developed. These include:

- the very successful Joint Venture model developed to advance the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan,
- the Model Forest program, developed to recognize the overlapping roles of multiple stakeholders in the conservation and management of forests,
- the community-based model for conservation and sustainable economic activities embodied by Biosphere Reserves under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program.

Recommendations from the Workshop Sessions

In cooperation with federal, provincial and territorial governments:

1. Hold annual NGO sessions on wildlife conservation to foster communications and partnerships;
2. Involve municipalities as active partners in the conservation and protection of habitats;
3. Involve local and traditional groups as core participants in the conservation habitats in oceanic and coastal ecosystems;
4. Develop a national vision of habitat conservation and submit it to the National Wildlife Meeting;
5. Contribute to the implementation of the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy by:
 - a) Working closely with First Nations and NGO's to develop habitat conservation actions on public and private lands;
 - b) Including habitat conservation and protection as first order items in the implementation of the strategy; and
 - c) Developing oceanic and coastal-based habitat conservation actions.



Distribution of Results:

The results of this workshop are being distributed to the 17 NGOs participating in the workshop, plus additional ones working on wildlife habitats that were not able to attend but nevertheless may contribute to implement these results and recommendations. Most importantly, they will be sent to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Wildlife Ministers and corresponding directors.

In addition, there was a press release about the NGO day during the meeting whereby some representatives had the opportunity to highlight the importance of this type of meeting. This took place on May 16th (*see appendix V*).

Appendix I – Letter of Invitation

April 11, 2002

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Federal-Provincial Wildlife Meeting – NGO Day

On behalf of the Organizing Committee for the NGO day at the Federal-Provincial Wildlife Meeting, I would like to welcome you to participate in this event.

As you know, the Federal-Provincial meeting will take place in Sackville, New Brunswick between May 13-15, 2002. This event will be hosted by the Canadian Wildlife Service, and more specifically George Finney.

As part of the schedule of activities, this meeting has allocated one full day, May 15th, to NGO discussions in a workshop format. In preparation for this workshop, I am sending you an outline and a context page briefly describing the main topics for discussion. The organizing committee recommended that the NGO day focus on habitat issues and considered the following as key themes for discussion:

- a) Communicating Habitat Messages;
- b) Recognizing Important Marine Habitats;
- c) Managing Public Lands; and,
- d) Governance.

These themes will be treated in a combination of plenary and group sessions, whereby they will be introduced by experts in each of the four themes, the scope of the issues will be explored, and opportunities for cooperation examined. The workshop will conclude with a plenary session highlighting the results of the theme sessions, and a putting them into a Regional, Canadian, and Continental perspective.

We continue to encourage your input on the preparations for this session and the session itself.

Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting,

Sincerely,

Jean Cinq-Mars, Executive Director
Wildlife Habitat Canada
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Appendix II – Press Release

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

16 May, 2002

Further information: Jean Cinq-Mars (613) 722-2090 (ext.224)

MUNICIPALITIES MAY HAVE KEY ROLE IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Canadian municipalities could have an increasingly important role to play in the protection of biodiversity and wildlife habitat, according to workshop participants at the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Wildlife Meeting being held in Sackville, New Brunswick this week. The workshop was a feature of the NGO Forum, an annual get-together of government and non-government organizations from across the country to discuss conservation issues.

“The recent trend to amalgamation is placing large areas of natural habitat within municipal boundaries,” stated Jean Cinq-Mars, President of Wildlife Habitat Canada and a co-convenor of the NGO Forum. “In Atlantic Canada, the merging of Halifax and Dartmouth comes to mind. But it’s the same thing in Montreal, Toronto, and nationwide.

Traditionally, three pillars have supported wildlife management: federal and provincial/territorial governments, and non-government organizations (NGOs). The proposal to add municipalities as a fourth pillar grew from a workshop on communications.

“Municipal boundaries now encompass some of the most vulnerable and heavily populated wetland, forest, and upland ecosystems in Canada,” explained Mr. Cinq-Mars. “Towns and cities have jurisdiction over a complex mix of urban and rural habitats. We need to acknowledge and support their potential as leaders in conservation and protection.”

A second major Recommendation to emerge from the day-long series of workshops called on Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Parks Canada to develop an action plan that will involve governments, NGOs and aboriginal peoples in implementing the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy in coastal and marine areas.

Reporting on this issue, Dr. John Lien, Professor of Marine Biology at Memorial University of Newfoundland, commented, “We have over 90 different categories of conservation regimes for protected areas on land, but next to none for marine habitat.

“Canada passed an outstanding Oceans Act a few years ago,” he continued. “We need to move ahead and start using it to protect our marine habitats. The need is especially pressing in our Arctic waters, where the impact of climatic change could even be profound enough to result in the opening of the Northwest Passage.”

Other topics covered in the day-long meeting included biodiversity conservation and governance of wildlife habitat. Sandy Baumgartner, Manager of Communications and Programs for the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the other co-convenor of the forum, expressed satisfaction with the calibre of all eight Recommendations and the quality of the meeting as a whole.

“We are especially grateful to Dr. George Finney, Director of the Canadian Wildlife Service in Atlantic Canada, for the outstanding job that he and his staff have done to facilitate such a stimulating and constructive meeting,” she said. “The benefits to wildlife will be far-reaching.”

Appendix III - List of Participants

NGO – Workshop on Wildlife Habitat – May 15th, 2002 – Sackville, New Brunswick

Name	Organization	Address	E-mail
Rose-Alma Mallet	New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists	801 Route 133 Boudreau-Ouest, N.-B. E4P 6P2	malletra@nbnet.nb.ca
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Appendix IV – Break-out Session Working Groups

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