

Habitat Conservation Plan

for the Town of Main Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador



May 2021





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Preface

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) some of the wildlife and wildlife habitats that are in greatest danger of being negatively impacted are those found within municipalities. In this province, the primary focus of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) is to conserve such valuable wildlife habitat through Stewardship Agreements. The Town of Main Brook was identified as having ecologically valuable and unique habitat located within its Municipal Planning Area.

A Habitat Stewardship Agreement (attached as Appendix 1) was signed by the Main Brook Town and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in May of 2021. This Habitat Conservation Plan indicates the Town's support for the long-term conservation of wildlife habitat through that Agreement and provides guidance in relation to managing activities which could impact the designated Conservation Areas.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following partners for their support in the continued implementation and activities of the Habitat Stewardship Program: NL Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, Environment Canada, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation and Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Plan Objectives

- (1) To present an assessment of the habitats and wildlife species designated for conservation.
- (2) To recommend protection and enhancement strategies which will maintain and/or increase wildlife use in designated Conservation Areas.
- (3) To describe potential engagement initiatives designed to increase Council and public awareness of the value of 'their' habitat for conserving wildlife.
- (4) To empower Council and municipal residents to conserve these habitats through informed development decision-making with the support of residents.

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Section 1: Habitat Conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador

Introduction

Human development has resulted in the destruction or alteration of many types of habitat all over the world. The number and diversity of North America's wildlife species has been declining over the latter half of the twentieth century. Natural habitats are regularly lost to urban, industrial, and agricultural expansion.

Recognizing the importance of habitat conservation to waterfowl populations, in 1986 Canada and the United States (later followed by Mexico) signed the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). This committed these countries to a long-term partnership to protect wetland habitats. Twenty-four 'joint ventures' have been subsequently established across North America to achieve the objectives of NAWMP. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) formally committed to its participation in the **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV)** in 1989.

The **EHJV (ehjv.ca)** conserves, enhances, and restores wildlife habitat for birds found across the six eastern Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and NL. Each province implements the partnership slightly differently, with each provincial program coordinated by a separate program manager and involving the cooperation of international partners, including government agencies and non-governmental conservation groups. In NL, the program is administered by the provincial Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (Wildlife Division). Other NL partners include the Stewardship Association of Municipalities, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (a branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada), Intervale Associates Inc., and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

As its primary contribution to the EHJV in NL, the provincial Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture created a "municipal habitat stewardship program" to help municipalities conserve important wildlife habitat found within planning boundaries. The program signs formal agreements with municipalities so that when future land use decisions are made, the value of that wildlife habitat will not be forgotten and that future activities will not have negative impacts on the lands ability to sustain wildlife. Since 1993, over forty municipalities have signed Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreements in NL becoming important links in a chain of conservation areas in NL and indeed, across North America.



Map of Habitat Stewardship Agreements signed in NL.

Roles of Stewardship Agreement Signatories

When a Stewardship Agreement was signed, each party committed to certain responsibilities:

The Province: The NL Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, through its Wildlife Division, would be expected to:

- Write a Habitat Conservation Plan in consultation with the Town (this plan).
- Work with the town on the review of any developments which are proposed to take place within the designated Conservation Areas.
- Support Council and local groups in implementing the Stewardship Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan; often with the partners of the NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture. This can include assisting in carrying out, where appropriate, wildlife and habitat conservation education, restoration or enhancement projects.

The Town: The Town of Main Brook and its Mayor and Council would be expected to:

- Ensure that the designated wildlife habitat areas (“Conservation Areas”) are protected from destruction or degradation; the town is to contact the EHJV Program Manager at the Wildlife Division (contact info on Page 2) in a timely manner to allow a 30-day written review of proposed development activities.
- Incorporate the Habitat Conservation Plan concepts into the Town’s next Municipal Plan draft or revision centrally through appropriate zoning and associated development regulations.
- Where opportunities arise, implement over time, the Habitat Conservation Plan in the community with the assistance of the NL EHJV partners.
- As able, participate in the activities of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM).

Section 2: Wetlands, Habitat, and Wildlife in Main Brook

Main Brook is a small community of roughly 240 people on the shores of the Northern Peninsula of the island of Newfoundland. Nestled on the southwest shore of Hare Bay, Main Brook was historically a fishing and lumbering community, and has seen a recent economic resurgence due to the revival of the Northern Lights fish processing plant and a growing tourism and outfitting industry. Known for its beauty and its hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling opportunities, Main Brook attracts locals, visitors, and tourists wishing to enjoy its isolation and nearly pristine nature. Along with valuable forest resources and world-class salmon rivers, the coastal areas of the surrounding Hare Bay support a wide diversity of waterfowl and seabirds, including one of the most important Common Eider habitats in our province.

Waterfowl, birds and wildlife in Main Brook

The entirety of the Town of Main Brook is within the Beaver Brook Limestone Subregion of the Northern Peninsula Forest Ecoregion of Newfoundland. Its growing season is shorter than most of the island (110-150 days to the average 145-170 days), it has lower precipitation, and possesses a significantly lower plant biodiversity than more southern regions of NF. As an example, White Pine (*Pinus resinosa*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Yellow Birch (*Betula allegheniensis*), and Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) are all absent, though there is no shortage of the dominant Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*) and Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*).

The Beaver Brook Limestone Subregion is somewhat sheltered, and as such houses the most productive boreal forests of the ecoregion. In addition to being productive from a silvicultural perspective, the subregion is also home to a wide variety of animal species of all shapes and sizes. Main Brook is home to many moose (*Alces alces*), woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*), and black bears (*Ursus americanus*), which in turn support a thriving outfitting industry.

Main Brook is also home to many species of waterfowl (such as American black duck, Green-winged teal, mergansers) and shorebirds (such as Greater yellowlegs and Spotted sandpiper). Many species of passerine birds (such as chickadees, swallows, and sparrows) are also known residents and visitors of the town. The online database eBird maintains a continually updating list of bird species found in Main Brook and recorded to one “hotspot” location near Town Hall (available at ebird.org/Canada/hotspots, enter “Main Brook, NL” in the location search.)

The rivers that run through Main Brook provide habitat for numerous fish species, supporting a strong recreational and commercial fishing industry, particularly for salmon and trout. The marine habitat surrounding Main Brook is similarly rich. The waters and islands of Hare Bay support all manner of marine mammals and sea bird. Seals, whales, gulls, and sea ducks all use the area at various points throughout the year.

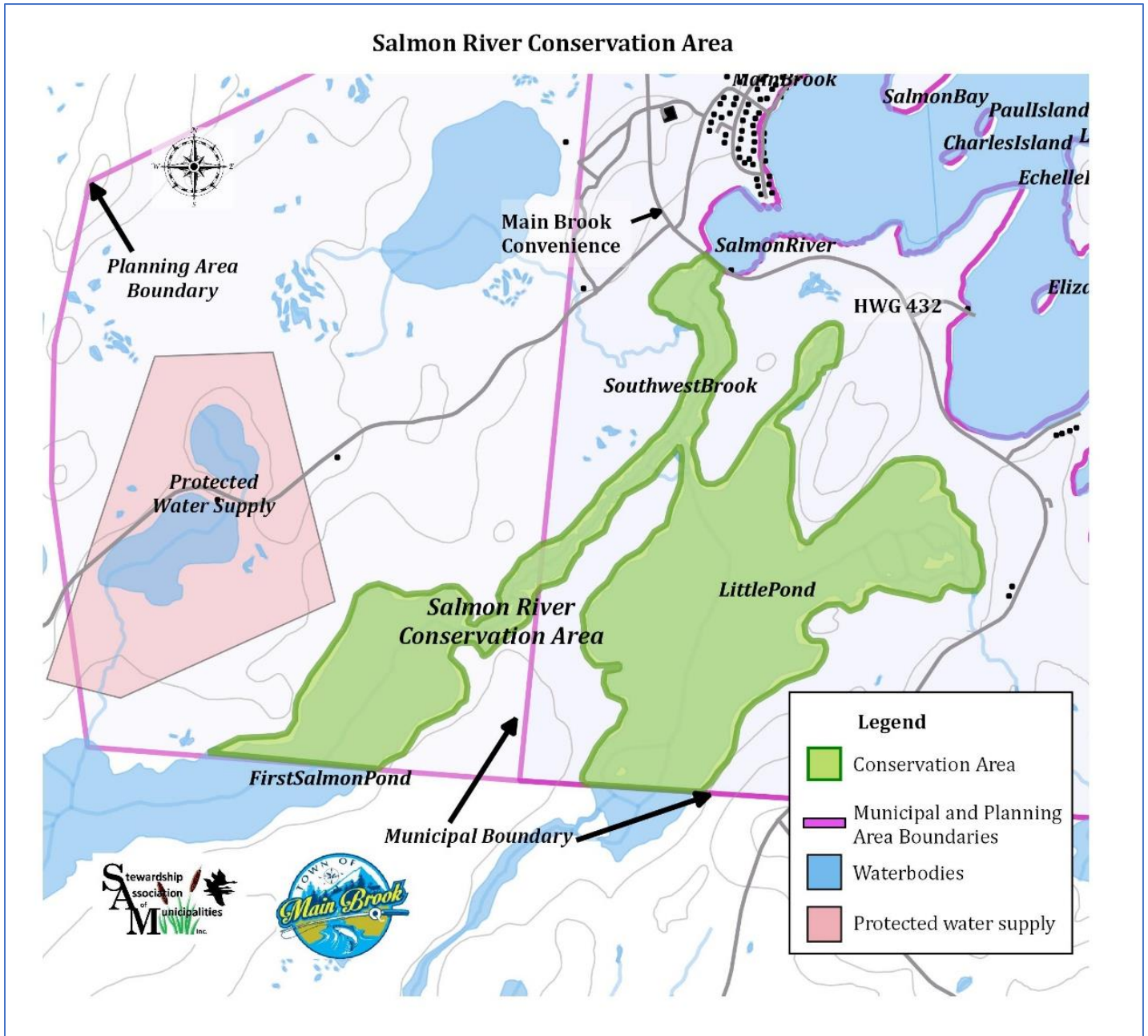


Fishers on a dock, Photo from Main Brook town website.

Conservation Area and Coastal Stewardship Area for Main Brook

Following discussions with members of Council, and geospatial analysis, assessments of known biodiversity in the area, two areas were selected for inclusion within the Stewardship Agreement. They are described in greater detail hereafter.

Salmon River, First Salmon Pond, and Little Pond Conservation Area



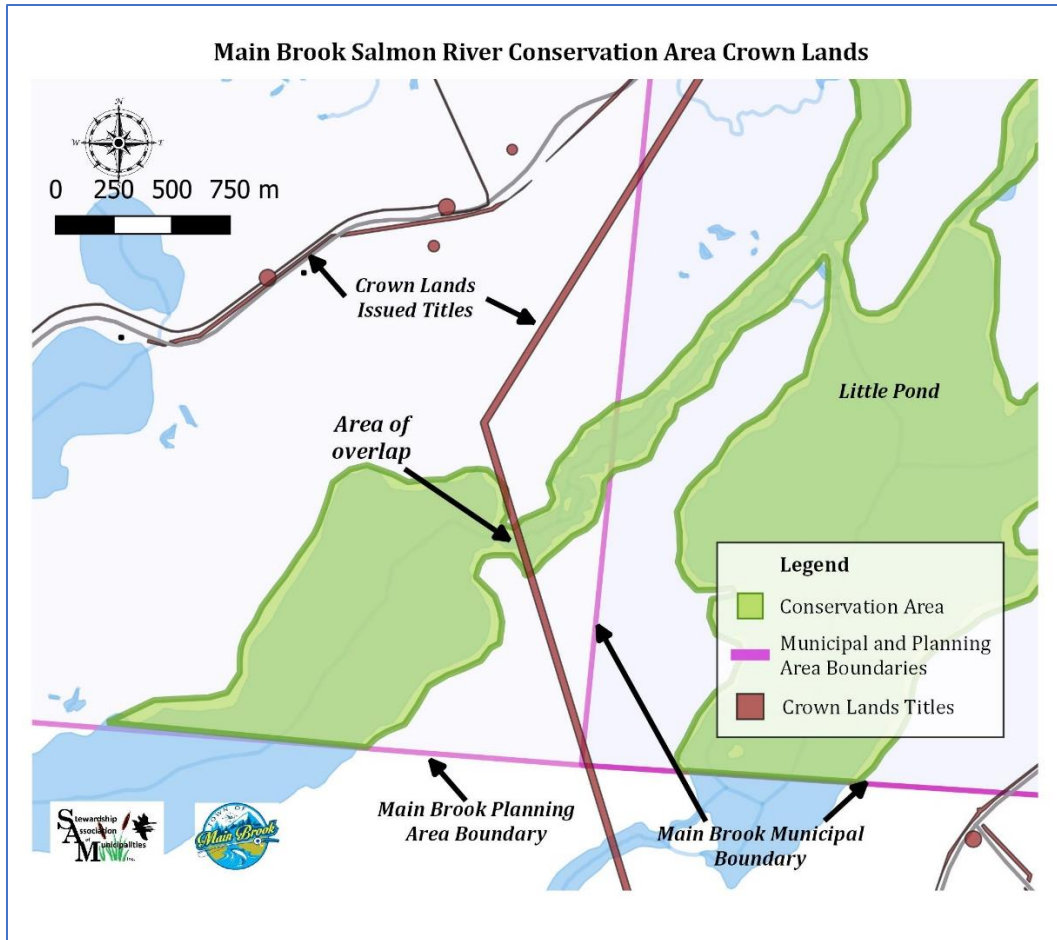
Residents and visitors alike know Main Brook to be a world-class fishing destination. The waterway is known as “Salmon River,” as well as the ponds that feed into it (“First Salmon Pond” and “Little Pond”) are scheduled salmon rivers that flow into Hare Bay and support a number of other species (e.g. brown trout, waterfowl) as well. The Conservation Area encompasses the portions of all three waterbodies that are within the town’s boundary.

The Conservation Area includes a 30 metre buffer (measured from the high water mark) surrounding the waterbodies. This buffer is intended to help preserve and maintain not only the integrity of the waterbodies and waterways themselves, but also the adjacent, riparian habitat. For more information on the importance and impact of maintaining healthy riparian buffers please refer to Section 4c of this plan below.

The designation of ‘Conservation Area,’ when adopted, does not limit hunting, fishing, trapping, or harvesting activities in areas where is it otherwise legally permissible to do so.



Moose, photo from Main Brook town website



A small Crown Lands grant runs through the Conservation Area. Roughly 20 meters wide, it transects the south western portion of the Conservation Area at the mouth of Salmon River and has been granted to Newfoundland Power for the maintenance of power lines (see above map). While we encourage the wise use of this area, it is nevertheless formally excluded from the Conservation Area.

Hare Bay Coastal Stewardship Zone

Due to its special coastal location, the people of Main Brook are uniquely positioned to exert influence over not only the land-based habitat within its municipal boundaries, but also over the waters, islands, and ecosystems of Hare Bay and beyond. In recognition of this influence exerted by coastal communities during everyday land use activities, the “Coastal Stewardship Area” was developed to identify, compliment, and promote local stewardship of coastal habitats beyond municipal boundaries. The principle goal is to help make municipalities, corporations, developers, landowners and other habitat stakeholders more aware of the value of coastal habitat and wildlife and to empower them to undertake their own actions to conserve this habitat. Its central premise is that each person has the

responsibility and opportunity to contribute towards the sustainability of our sea duck and seabird populations so that we may continue to enjoy the privileges associated with both our consumptive and non-consumptive use of our outdoor resource.

The Hare Bay Coastal Stewardship Area (see below map) encompasses a total area of 271 km² in which the parties will seek to promote wise use and good stewardship practices. Central to the area's importance is the Hare Bay Ecological Reserve, which is composed of the Gilliat, Spring, and Brent Islands. This provincial protected area protects 31 km² of breeding and nesting habitat for Common Eiders, as well as summer breeding habitat for common and Arctic terns, Ring-billed gulls, Herring gulls, Great



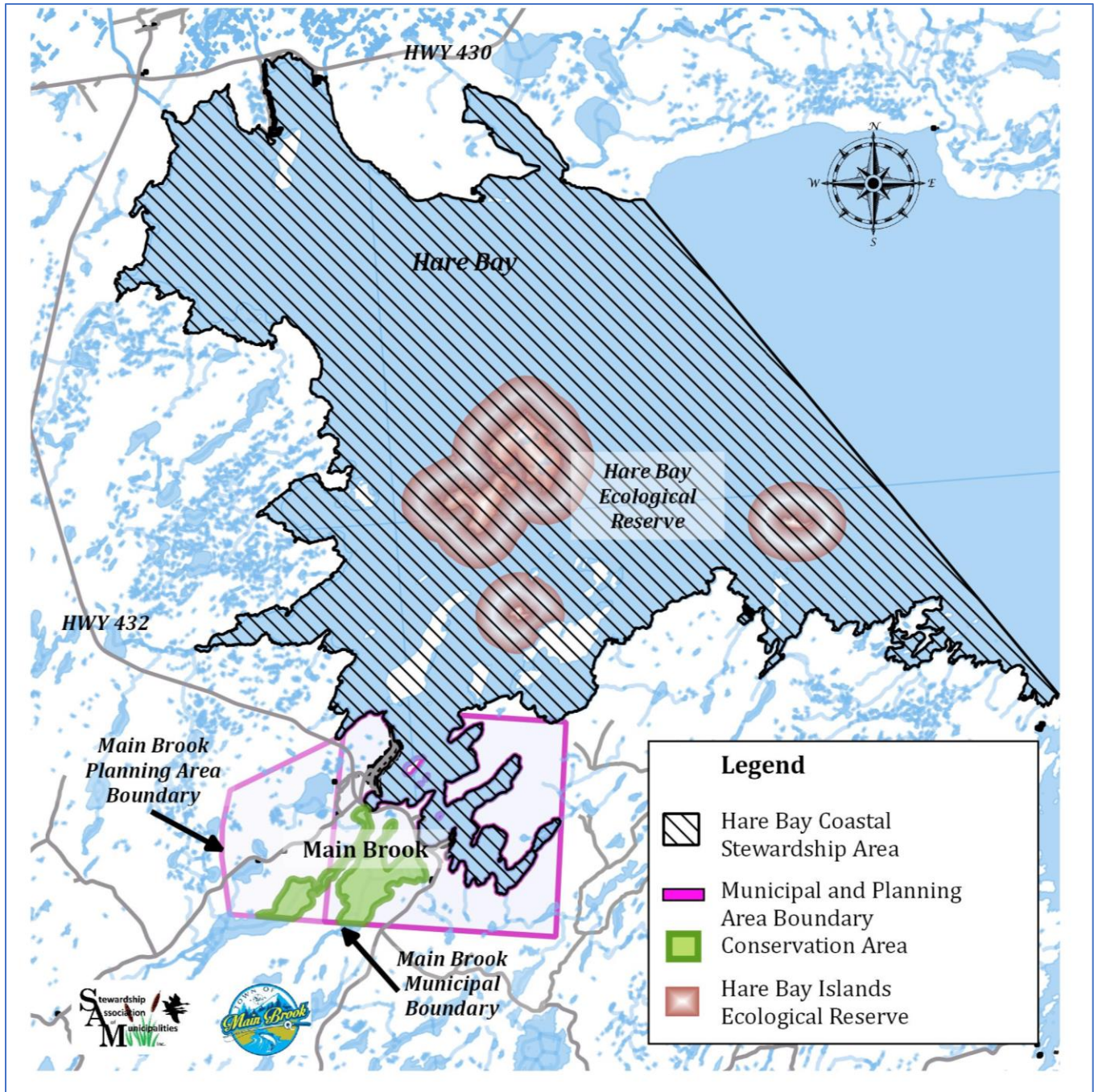
Common Eider

black-backed gulls, Double-crested cormorants, Leach's storm petrel, Black-legged kittiwake, and Black guillemot. In addition to these breeding species, visiting waterfowl to Hare Bay include American black duck, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, and Canada goose.

Several neighbouring islands within Hare Bay are also designated as Sensitive Wildlife Areas by the provincial government due to their known use by eiders and other sea ducks.

In recognition of the importance of Hare Bay, in June of 2008 the Town of St. Anthony signed a Coastal Stewardship Agreement. That Agreement similarly committed them to promoting wise use practices for activity in Hare Bay. The citizens of Main Brook have a long history of environmental stewardship in Hare Bay. Signing this Agreement now formally recognizes the role played by the citizens of Main Brook in promoting wise use practices and good environmental stewardship in the area, and provides a further avenue for the continued advocacy and development of good stewardship practices in the area.

Coastal Stewardship Zone for Hare Bay



Section 3: Policies for Habitat Conservation

a. Incorporate your Stewardship Agreement into your Municipal Plan

During the preparation of any draft Municipal Plan, or during the process of a future Municipal Plan Review or development regulations, the Town Council will incorporate the Habitat Conservation Plan concept into any resulting Municipal Plan or related Master Plan. The Conservation Areas **shall be zoned Open Space Conservation, Environmental Conservation, Open Space Recreation**, or some similar consistent zoning designation within any future municipal planning documents as governed by the Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000). For the Town of Main Brook, the designation **Environmental Protection** would be most appropriate, though other zoning designations may be considered.

b. Refer all possible developments to the Wildlife Division

Activities within the Conservation Areas will be managed whereby permitted activities do not result in the loss of wildlife habitat or wildlife populations. As such, conservation will be at the forefront of management decisions. When council reviews/approves permits, regulations, developments or by-laws which could affect the Management Units (Conservation Areas), **Council will first consult with the NL EHJV Program Manager** at the Wildlife Division, Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture providing a 30 day notice period.

c. Keep riparian buffer areas intact and protect salmon habitat

Riparian buffers are strips of untouched land surrounding wetlands, lakes, rivers, ponds, and streams. They are composed of trees, shrubs, grasses, cattails, and sedges and provide for a high level of wildlife use, as corridors for travel, for protection from predators, and against inclement weather. Healthy riparian areas filter and reduce surface water runoff from upland areas by trapping sediment and filtering out excess nutrients, pesticides and bacteria. Vegetation in riparian areas affects how readily water enters soil and has a positive effect on replenishing of local groundwater. They also serve to anchor soil with roots, helping to build stream banks and prevent erosion and help control flood levels.

Fish habitat quality is strongly influenced by the amount of riparian edge left along shorelines. Treed buffers provide shade and help keep water temperatures down, impact water quality, and provide spawning and rearing areas for fish and nesting areas for waterfowl. They provide food for wildlife when leaves, insects, and larvae drop into the water body off surrounding trees and shrubs.

The province, via the provincial Lands Act – Section 7(1), requires a crown land reserve (sometimes called an easement or buffer) of 15 metres along all water

bodies greater than 1 metre in width and the maintenance of permanent riparian areas next to all watercourses. Note that the Province, via the Provincial Environmental Protection Act (2003), requires any projects undertaken within 200 metres of a scheduled salmon river to be registered with the province and undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Atlantic Salmon

Wild Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) is an important species for the people of Atlantic Canada for a variety of reasons, including social, cultural, recreational, economic, recreational, and food security reasons, as well as an indicator of environmental quality. Conserving the resource for current and future use is therefore a priority – and it cannot be achieved without the cooperation and stewardship of local communities.



Atlantic salmon, photo from Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Unfortunately, wild Atlantic salmon populations are declining throughout their range. Declining stocks have prompted various government responses, including (though not limited to) the closure of commercial fisheries in Eastern Canada, reduction of daily and seasonal bag limits, and the introduction of mandatory catch and release programs of large salmon in the recreational fisheries of insular Newfoundland. Protecting good salmon habitat and the associated habitats is essential to ensure the continued survival of the species, so that the resource can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Fishing and angling has long been a source of food security, industry, and recreation in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is not the intention of the EHJV to restrict the use and enjoyment of this resource – rather, the intention is to help conserve and protect its use for current and future generations. Promoting sustainable use, ensuring residents and visitors are familiar with Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) regulations, and reporting illegal fishing activity to the appropriate authorities are all ways in which Municipalities can promote wise use of recreational fisheries within their towns. For more information, an angler's guide can be found at nfl.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/NL/AG/anglersguide.

Some general best practices include:

1. Know, respect, and enforce current angling regulations and restrictions for the area
2. Leave nothing but footprints – remove all litter and waste
3. Report blocked culverts or barriers to fish passages to the appropriate authorities
4. Report instances of poached to 877-820-0999
5. Maintain and protect riparian buffers (see Section C above)
6. When appropriate, restore and enhance salmon habitat

Additionally, the town should build awareness of and adherence to the crown land reserve designation by all residents and businesses. This means that lawns should not extend right down to the water, parking lots should not extend right up to the water, etc. The natural vegetation must be left in place. The 15 metre buffer mandated by the Lands Act is the minimum protection around all waterbodies and marsh areas and is critical within the Conservation Area.



Healthy riparian buffers surrounding an urban stream in the autumn. Staff photo.

d. Form a committee

We recommend that the Town of Main Brook utilize an existing, or create a new, committee of council that can help you carry out some of the initiatives described in this plan. Some names used in other communities include *Environment Committee*, *Wildlife Committee*, *Habitat Committee*, *Trails and Recreation Committee*, etc. In our experience a dedicated committee can raise the profile of the habitat conserved by your agreement and increase public support. Many of these types of groups have found benefits in reserving spots in the group for a younger person, a high school student, or both. These committees can organize events, apply for grants, conduct cleanups and other projects, host hikes and walks, and many other activities including those described in Section 4.

e. Understand Fish and Wildlife Enforcement

A Stewardship Agreement does not affect hunting, trapping, or fishing rights; where these activities are safe and legal in a certain area, they will remain that way after designation. However, many municipalities are (rightly) concerned about hunting and fishing activities that fall outside what is safe or legal no matter where they take place.

Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officers can enforce regulations and can be contacted 24/7 at 1 877 820 0999. They can deal with a wide variety of other wildlife-related enforcement issues and are a good contact for poaching issues, hunting in inappropriate areas, and illegal hunting. Your closest office in Corner Brook (115 Riverside Drive) can be contacted at 709 637 5995.

For enforcement officers to fully understand the problem and to be able to pursue a case, it is helpful to provide specific details. Without these details, it can be difficult for enforcement officers to properly follow up.

Enforcing regulations such as these can be complicated, especially where federal/provincial jurisdiction overlaps, and different species are covered by different laws. Partnering with enforcement officers to ensure accuracy, SAM has produced a guide about conservation and enforcement issues at samnl.org/resources.



**24 / 7 report line:
1.877.820.0999**

f. Promote wise use of ATVs and snowmobiles

The use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), four-wheelers, and snowmobiles, is common in NL. While the use of these vehicles is essential for a variety of activities, their irresponsible use in wetlands and other sensitive wildlife areas can have negative impacts on the habitats and wildlife that inhabit them. In addition to the wheels tearing up plants and leaving clear tracks in the soil, the weight of the vehicles can compress the delicate substrate, damaging the soil and plants and changing the hydrology patterns. Wetlands habitats can take years to rehabilitate and recover from this kind of damage, if they are able to recover at all.



ATV damage in wetland habitat. These tracks can destroy vegetation, compress underlying soil, change hydrology patterns, and create scars on the landscape can take years to heal. SAM staff photos.

There are a number of existing regulations in place designed to protect ATV users and sensitive habitat. A summary of ATV Regulations and Safety Tips, as well as a link to the relevant legislation can be found at gov.nl.ca/snl/drivers/atvsafety/. Notably, the use of ATVs is restricted to approved areas, designated trails, or to persons holding a big game license in order to transport an animal from where it was killed. In the case of the latter, the number of trips is restricted to 5. Note that ATVs are only to be used in these areas **after** it is killed, not for the purposes of locating the animal.

g. Encourage Best Practices and Wise for Eider Conservation

The Common Eider

Eiders nest almost entirely on offshore coastal islands due to the fact that nesting islands are most often free from land-based predators. This predator-free environment is important since eiders nest in partially concealed hollows among grasses and shrubs, making them quite vulnerable. Disturbance to nesting females may cause them to abandon their nest, leaving eggs or chicks as easy prey for predatory gulls and other wildlife.

On the Island of Newfoundland, Common eiders were once highly numerous, but by the 1970's, the island breeding population is believed to have been reduced to approximately 500 pairs. Many factors are believed to have contributed to the drastic decline, but they include illegal over-hunting, egg collecting, disturbance on nesting grounds, increased predation by gulls, habitat degradation, and oil spills. The good news is that populations have recovered significantly since that time.

The increase in the eider nesting population can be, in part, attributed to conservation efforts of local residents and the partners of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture. Past conservation efforts have included raising and releasing eider ducklings, monitoring the breeding populations and building and deploying nest shelters. The raise and release program was initiated by the Canadian Wildlife Service in 1988. Eggs were collected from the Grey Islands, Quebec and Nova Scotia and incubated until hatch. They were then dry brooded and feed pullet grower for four weeks. At four weeks old the ducklings were taken to Apron Island in Hare Bay and held in a pen overnight that was placed partly in the intertidal zone. The ducklings were released the following day. This program lasted for 10 years with a total of 2700 ducklings released. For the last 2 years of the project ducklings were released in Sacred Bay. After the initial years of the project the White Bay Central Development Association became very involved and kept the project going. The placement of eider shelters have also positively influenced the nesting population as local residents reported an increase in the number of common eider broods following nest shelter deployment in the early 1990's.

Despite the increase in breeding population size Common Eiders still face pressure from predators, climate change, over-hunting and recreational tourism activities. Thus conservation efforts are necessary to aid eiders in reaching historic breeding numbers and to ensure their protection in the future.

Determining what is "wise use" of wildlife habitat is not always easy, however, there are several ways in which use can occur but still accomplish the goal of protecting sea duck/seabird populations.

Common Eider and other waterfowl:

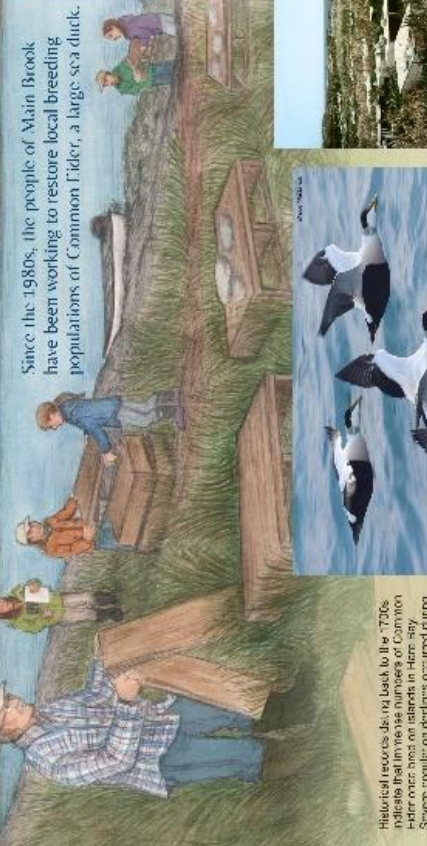
As it relates to the Common eider, the following outlines guidelines for town residents to, as best as possible, live in harmony with eider populations:

- Generally, where possible, avoid sea duck nesting islands in the spring, especially eider islands during May and June.
 - If you must go to a nesting island, stay near the shore and out of sight of nesting females.
 - Never remove eggs from the nests.
 - Never chase or harass ducklings.

- Always avoid young eider while operating motor boats since ducklings are very vulnerable if they get separated from the adults.
- If you hunt eiders or other waterfowl you should remember to:
 - Always stay within prescribed bag limits.
 - Do not hunt out of season.
 - Know your ducks so that you do not mistake eiders for other species of waterfowl.
- For those who would like to get actively involved in eider conservation the following list provides a list of ways you may help:
 - Report observations of new or abandoned nesting, brood rearing, feeding, moulting or overwintering locations.
 - Report any obvious imminent dangers to the eider population (this could be wildlife predators, human activity, weather or other factors).
 - Help minimize the effects of commercial activities on eiders.
 - Invite/welcome educational speakers to your community to speak on stewardship and conservation of eiders.
 - Spread awareness of the need to protect nesting grounds among pleasure boaters and fisherman.
 - Encourage others to get involved in eider conservation.

Working to Restore Eider Duck Colonies of Hare Bay

Since the 1980s, the people of Main Brook have been working to restore local breeding populations of Common Eider, a large sea duck.



Historical records date back to the 1770s indicate that in many hundreds of Common Eider once bred on islands in Main Brook. Severe population declines occurred during the 19th and 20th centuries.

These declines were likely caused by non-sustainable harvesting of ducks and eggs and excessive hunting.



The birds typically leave their nests of four to six ducklings in the water. They tend to feed with their parents in the water. Common Eiders are also known to feed on land. A search for information on the Common Eider can be found at www.birds.org.

What you can do:

- Avoid nesting islands during the breeding season, especially May and June.
- Keep distant from ducklings in the water. Boat traffic can cause ducklings to be scared away from adults. When this happens, ducklings become easy prey for nearby gulls.
- Prevent oil spillage and pollution. Carry trash home.
- Respect hunting regulations.

This narrative of wildlife restoration of muskrat and wildlife is part of the heritage of Main Brook. To learn more about how you can help, contact the White Bay Central Development Association in Main Brook.



For conservation, Common Eiders provided families of novel Newfoundland and Labrador with food sustenance and feathers for bedding. In recent decades, the people of Main Brook have used intensive management techniques designed to enhance local populations and habitat for eiders.

Nest studies have been placed in breeding colonies in an effort to improve nesting success. By feeding ducklings in the egg, the parents are able to provide them with the best of both worlds from both the local and non-local organizations, resulting in Main Brook today's population. With ongoing research techniques involving incubation of eggs brought in from Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland colonies. After weeks of successful brooding, the ducklings were released in Hare Bay to join wild eider ducklings under the protective care of other parents. Since release, eider ducklings have returned to Hare Bay as breeding birds.

In specific coastal areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, such as Hare Bay, breeding colonies of Common Eider are increasing in size and new colonies are forming.



An interpretive panel on Eider conservation found outside of Town Hall in Main Brook, produced by Intervale Associates

h. Work to reduce Marine Pollution

Perhaps one of the greatest ecological challenges facing coastal communities is reducing the amount of waste, plastic, garbage, and pollution that enters our waters. If waste disposal habitats are not changed, projections suggest that by 2050, there will be more plastics than fish in our oceans. The negative effects of plastic pollution in our marine ecosystems is well documented and frightening, causing marine life to die and for the toxins found in plastics to move throughout the food web and wind up on our dinner tables. For those that rely on ocean resources for food security and our livelihoods, the impact of this ecological disaster will be felt even more acutely.

Marine pollution is a problem that can seem insurmountable at times, but small actions can have a large impact. Promoting, developing, and implementing the following practices is a great way to start.

- Keep shorelines and waterfronts clean. Keeping debris away from shorelines and out of the water reduces how much waste gets carried in by wind and rain.
- Properly maintain boating and fishing equipment in order to minimize accidental release of oil into the water.
- Organize beach and waterfront clean-ups.
- Promote the proper disposal of single use plastics which can otherwise accumulate in our oceans and on our shores.
- Encourage reduction and diversion of waste.

The best way to reduce marine pollution is to cut it off at the source. Fewer plastics, diversion of organic waste to compost, and proper management of wastewater all result in less waste in our oceans. Main Brook is already home to a number of composting initiatives – encouraging these and similar projects is a great way to reduce waste (and save money) in the community.

i. Encourage Best Practices in Fishing and Salmon Angling

Fishing and angling has long been a source of food security, industry, and recreation in Main Brook. As such, the citizens of Main Brook are invested in the wise use of the resource, and in using ‘best practice’ approaches to maintain the integrity of their salmon stocks and rivers. It is not the intention of the EHJV to restrict the use and enjoyment of this resource – rather, the intention is to help conserve and protect its use for current and future generations. Promoting sustainable use, ensuring residents and visitors are familiar with Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) regulations, and reporting illegal fishing activity to the appropriate authorities are all ways in which Municipalities can promote wise use of recreational fisheries within their towns. For more information, an angler’s guide can be found at nfl.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/NL/AG/anglersguide.

j. Participate in SAM

When the Town of Main Brook signs a Habitat Stewardship Agreement with the province, it is provided opportunity to become a participating member of SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities, samnl.org). SAM is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose member municipalities together conserve, enhance, and restore important wildlife habitat. SAM represents its members on issues related to wildlife conservation. SAM will maintain a public page about your agreement featuring maps, photos, facts, and information on local attractions. This link can be included on your town's website; this will help increase residents' knowledge and understanding of the agreement and program. To view examples of these pages, please refer to samnl.org/membership.

SAM meets each spring (May or June) and fall (September or October) with host municipalities rotating among members and regions. Identify a representative of your town (mayor, councillor, staff, or involved resident) to attend at least one of these meetings per year. This will connect Main Brook to like-minded municipalities and link you to resources and training. You may also be interested in co-hosting a SAM meeting in the Town of Main Brook in the future; many municipalities enjoy this for the exposure it provides for their wildlife habitat and associated projects.



Field trip at a recent SAM meeting in Grand Falls-Windsor. Staff photo

Section 4: Habitat Conservation and Education Strategies

This section presents ideas for community education, engagement, and habitat enhancement. Community engagement and partnerships are the true strengths of any stewardship agreement.

One benefit that people receive from stewardship is the opportunity to increase their knowledge of nature. These projects are great for local groups, allowing hands-on involvement in conservation efforts. Communities across the province who have signed stewardship agreements have had great success becoming involved in exactly these types of projects and will also be resources for you to connect with, especially at SAM meetings. The ideas below, and many others, can be found at samnl.org/resources.

Explore grants and funding

Many of these activities and programs are free or can be funded through small community grants and via partnerships. Large grant applications may take several months to prepare if committees are involved. Allow enough time to apply for these grants and to obtain the letters of support that local partners such as SAM or the NL Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture resources may provide; keep an eye on deadlines as they approach. SAM provides a regularly updated list of many grants that will be relevant to you along with their deadlines at samnl.org/resources.

Hire a Green Team

Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador (ccnl.ca) can help you hire summer Green Teams and interns, some of which can be funded by corporations at no cost to your organization. Students or recent graduates can work with municipalities on environmental projects. Municipalities with Stewardship Agreements have often received Green Teams. Examples of potential projects could include nest boxes, bird monitoring, trail maintenance, community outreach, wildlife surveys, and developing field guides. Green Team members and interns could help train local high school students in monitoring and could develop educational material designed to raise awareness for conservation and stewardship initiatives. Sharing a CCNL Green Team with neighbouring towns might be explored, especially if other towns are beginning environmental projects as well.



Find and place geocaches

Geocaches (small containers found via GPS; **geocaching.com** and **various mobile apps such as c:geo**) can be added alongside trails as well to provide a fun and inexpensive activity for walkers, hikers, and groups. It is a great idea to place geocaches near or at where you want people to go – to help them discover a new trail, a beautiful lookout, or an interpretive spot, for example.

SAM and the EHJV partnership (username EHJV_Stewardship) currently maintain a number of geocaches in SAM municipalities across the province. After creating a geocaching account (or logging in first), the full list can be found at **geocaching.com/seek/nearest.aspx?u=EHJV_Stewardship**.



A nanocache style geocache before installation (with house key for scale). Staff photo

Construct trails & put up interpretive signs

Many SAM municipalities have found that trails increase recreation and health for residents and improve tourism possibilities. When constructed carefully, trails can increase stewardship by allowing people to discover new areas. They can help residents and visitors connect to nature, especially where interpretive signage is used to help point out interesting landscape and wildlife.

Recreational and tourism opportunities can help raise awareness and educate visitors and residents about waterfowl and the importance of wetlands. Hiking, walking, birdwatching, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and geocaching are popular activities in many Conservation Areas across the province. Other activities such as photography and paddling (canoeing and kayaking) could be further

encouraged as low-impact, healthy recreation opportunities for both residents and visitors.

In developing recreational and tourism opportunities, wildlife must be carefully considered during the planning process. Otherwise, human activities can negatively impact the resource that provides the attraction.

As part of the Stewardship Agreement, the Town of Main Brook will be provided with a large highway road sign and if interested an interpretive sign suitable for trail entrances. Additional interpretive signage could possibly be funded through grants to the Town of Pasadena; for example, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation often funds trail and park projects (see funding opportunities link above for other possibilities)



Example Sign: Lewisporte's Habitat Stewardship Road sign. Staff photo

Watch wildlife

Local groups and interested volunteers can watch and monitor birds, plants, and wildlife in all areas of the Town. This can provide information on changes in populations and can indicate problems or progress. By involving residents, they become more aware of these special places.

iNaturalist and **Seek** are free smartphone apps for those interested in learning to identify plants, butterflies and other insects, other invertebrates, birds, fungi, and mammals. They can be used to build plant and wildlife lists for any area, as a learning tool, for school students, family nature walks, and just for fun.

iNaturalist is great for adults as each nature observations turns into a real scientific data point. It also has a neat feature where other experts will identify your sightings

for you - after taking a photo, it will often be identified within a few hours by another experienced user on the app. Turn your location services on so that your sighting can be found on the map and so others can help with your identifications. **Seek** is best for kids as it never saves location data and provides fun badges.



ebird.org is another free website and app to record bird sightings. It is already very popular across NL with more than 10 000 bird lists submitted each year.

Start contributing to eBird at secure.birds.cornell.edu/casso/account/create

When watching wildlife, be mindful of tides and wetland (damp, soft, slippery) habitat, making safety your priority. Aim to cause as little stress and disturbance as possible to wildlife.

Help Main Brook residents enjoy nature

It's not just kids that enjoy the outdoors – adults and seniors benefit from spending time in nature as well. Birdwatching workshops have been successful in SAM communities, and snowshoe hikes in the winter or hikes in the summer are often enjoyed by adults as well. Tuckamore Lodge, in partnership with Intervale Associates, has hosted youth birdwatching outreach events in the past.

Themes such as winter tracking or edible plant hikes can increase interest. Hikes can be inexpensive ways for adults in Main Brook to discover the natural areas of the town, socialize, and learn something new. CCNL Green Teams are required to give interpretive presentations as a part of their work programs; SAM's **Guide to delivering interpretive hikes** and field guides at samnl.org/resources could help CCNL Green Teams or summer staff lead hikes for residents and/or visitors. These could be used to create a small brochure and 'bird checklist' or wildlife list of the area, or as the basis for field guides which could be developed by a Green Team, high school, or a relevant committee.



Interpretive "Winter wetland walk" at Gambo Bog. Staff photo

Explore outdoor education programs

Public education can help foster a greater sense of habitat stewardship among town residents.

There are excellent wetland education programs that can be adapted for activities in Main Brook. Programs span every season and age group including *Wetlands in Winter* (Tantramar Wetlands Centre, weted.com), *Marsh Bingo* and *Creatures of the Night* (Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, oakhammockmarsh.ca), *Junior Naturalists* (Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, wyemarsh.com), and *Wetland Field Trips* (Ducks Unlimited Canada, ducks.ca). Canadian Wildlife Federation's *Project Wild* can foster environmental ethics in youth and adults alike. Many evening programs also exist that would be great for guide and scout groups.

Nature and Art

Some stewardship municipalities such as Grand Falls-Windsor and Whitbourne use natural locations to bring together nature and art. Local art classes and drama groups can use an outdoor theatre for educational exercises. This could involve field trips whereby students could interpret natural beauty through various mediums (chalk, paint, etc.) or a day of sketching to the sound of nature or music. Companies like crayola.com offer resource grants to educators.

Similarly, drama classes could develop a play or series of dramatic readings based on nature. Several amphitheatres in Eastern Canada use the open-air concept to show nature-related programs outdoors in the evenings. Content can be tailored to various ages and could include nature-related craft projects as a follow up. Good starting points for nature projects for children include hookedonnature.org, planetpals.com, and hctfeducation.ca/resource-room

Conclusion

We hope these ideas have you thinking about ways you could become involved in protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat in your area. Keep an eye on samnl.org, our newsletter, and our social media, where additional resources are added regularly – and we hope to see you at the SAM conferences each year. Remember, community involvement is the true strength of a Stewardship Agreement!

Appendix A: Main Brook Habitat Stewardship Agreement

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Municipal Stewardship Agreement for the Town of Main Brook

THIS AGREEMENT made at Main Brook in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, this 06/19 day of, 2021

BETWEEN: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, as represented by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (herein called "the Minister")

- of the one part -

AND: THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF Main Brook, a municipal corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* (herein called the "The Town")

-of the other part-

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has entered into an Agreement with others for the implementation of the of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan through the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture;

AND WHEREAS the parties hereto recognize that the proper protection and management of coastal, wetland and upland habitats are fundamental tools in maintaining and enhancing the wildlife populations, particularly birds, in the province;

AND WHEREAS the Minister proposed that certain important wildlife habitats within the Town be protected and enhanced through and with the cooperation of the Town in accordance with this Agreement;

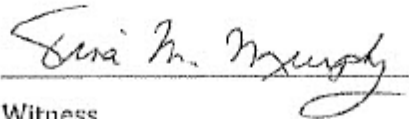
AND WHEREAS the Town has agreed to enter into this Agreement for the purpose of protecting and enhancing those areas of important habitat within its jurisdiction.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS AGREED BY THE PARTIES AS FOLLOWS:

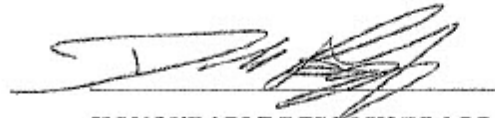
1. The lands herein delineated and designated as a Conservation Area (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule A annexed hereto) shall be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan for better protection of the habitat for wildlife.
2. Within the limits of its jurisdiction, the Town shall permit only those activities within the Conservation Areas that have no negative or adverse impact upon the habitat or the wildlife which utilize those habitats.
3. The parties may establish other Conservation Areas as may be desirable from time to time.
4. The Town agrees that in the preparation of a Municipal Plan for the Town or any amendments to any existing Municipal Plan, the areas designated as Conservation Areas shall be recommended by the Town to be appropriately declared protected areas under subsection 13(3)(f) of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000)* (or such other legislation in amendment or substitution therefore as may be brought into effect from time to time). The Town in passing regulations or by-laws related to the protected areas so designated under the Municipal Plan or amendments thereto and which may affect the Conservation Area(s) shall do so in consultation with the Minister and in keeping with the principles of this Agreement.
5. The parties to this Agreement, their consultants, servants or agents, shall have and exercise reasonable rights of access to the Conservation Area(s) for all purposes necessary or incidental to this Agreement and in particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, for the purpose of developing and carrying out the Agreement.
6. If at any time during the term of this Stewardship Agreement the Parties deem it necessary or desirable to make any alterations or additions to it, they may do so by means of a written amendment between them which shall be supplemental to and form part of this agreement.
7. Each of the parties hereto agree that they will exercise their best efforts to further develop management measures for more effectively carrying out of their mutual intentions as expressed in this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have caused these presents to be executed in accordance with their respective rules and regulations the day and year first before written.

SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture in the presence of:



Witness



HONOURABLE DERRICK BRAGG, MHA
MINISTER OF FISHERIES, FORESTRY
AND AGRICULTURE, District of Fogo
Island- Cape Freels

THE SEAL OF the Town Council of the Town of Main Brook hereunto affixed in the presence of:



Witness



THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF
Main Brook

Schedule A Map:

