

Habitat Conservation Plan for the City of Corner Brook



December 2019





City of Corner Brook
5 Park Street, P.O. Box 1080
Corner Brook, NL A2H 6E1



NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture
Department of Fisheries and Land Resources - Wildlife Division
192 Wheeler's Road, P.O. Box 2006
Corner Brook, NL, Canada A2H 7J5
709 637 2013



Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM)
P.O. Box 20024 Mill Brook Mall
Corner Brook, NL A2H 7J5
samnl.org

Municipal Stewardship Agreement for The City of Corner Brook

THIS AGREEMENT made at **Corner Brook**, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, this 17th day of December, 202018

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

- of the one part -

AND: **THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORNER BROOK**, a municipal corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* (herein called the "The City")

-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 (EHJV);

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 wetlands and associated wildlife habitats within The City be protected and enhanced through and with the cooperation of The City in accordance with this Agreement and a Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereafter;

AND WHEREAS The City 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 Management Unit (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule A annexed hereto) shall be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement including any Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereunder for better protection of the wetlands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

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 valuable wildlife habitat through Stewardship Agreements. The City of Corner Brook was identified as having ecologically valuable habitat located within its Municipal Planning Area and signed a Stewardship Agreement with the Government of NL on December 17, 2018 to conserve this wildlife habitat (Appendix 1).

In accordance with the Stewardship Agreement, the City of Corner Brook manages the designated areas with technical advice provided by the provincial Wildlife Division, in part via this Habitat Conservation Plan. With the signing of this plan, both parties accept this Habitat Conservation Plan and will use it to minimize negative impacts on the wildlife habitat.

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.

We agree to work towards implementing this *Habitat Conservation Plan* in the City of Corner Brook:

2. Within the limits of its jurisdiction, The City shall permit only those activities within the Management Units that have no negative or adverse impact upon the wetland habitat or the waterfowl or other wildlife which utilize those habitats.

3. The parties may establish other Management Units as may be desirable from time to time. The Management Units shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Conservation Plan developed to enhance and protect the wetland habitats, the waterfowl and other wildlife which utilize those habitats.

4. The Habitat Conservation Plan shall be developed in cooperation with The City and the Minister agrees to provide such advice and expertise necessary or advisable for the development of the Habitat Conservation Plan.

5. The City agrees that in the preparation of a Municipal Plan for The City or any amendments to any existing Municipal Plan, the areas designated as Management Units shall be recommended by The City 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 City 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 Management Unit(s) shall do so in consultation with the Minister and in keeping with the principles of this Agreement.

6. The parties to this Agreement, their consultants, servants or agents, shall have and exercise reasonable rights of access to the Management Unit(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 Habitat Conservation Plan.

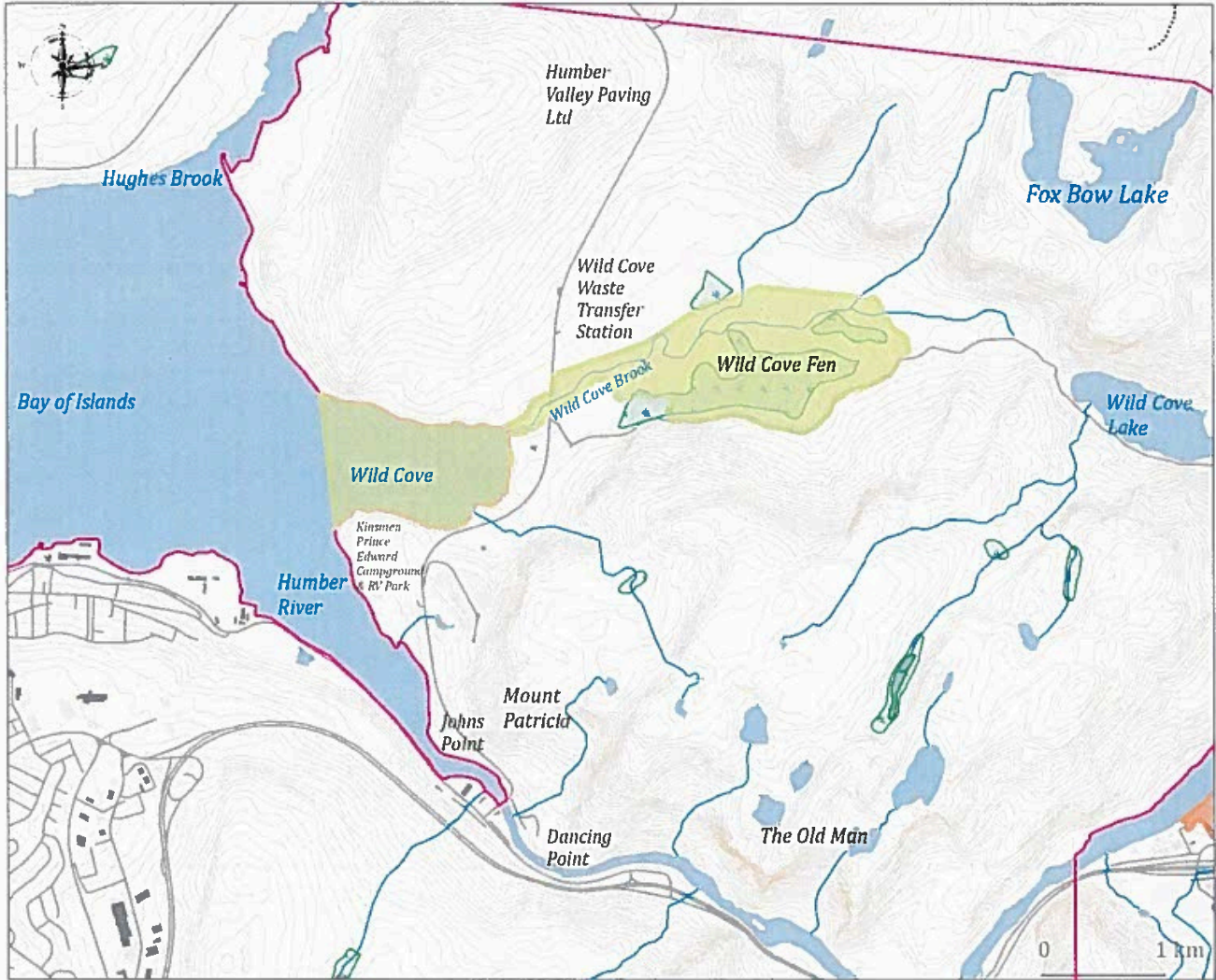
7. If at any time during the term of this Stewardship Agreement the Parties deem it necessary or desirable to make any alterations or additions to it, they may do so by means of a written amendment between them which shall be supplemental to and form part of this agreement.

8. 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.

Schedule A: Wild Cove Management Unit

Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement

City of Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada



Legend

- Management Unit
- Municipal Planning Area
- Roads
- Water bodies
- Wetlands



July 26th 2018

Contents

Section 1: Habitat Conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador	5
Map of Habitat Stewardship Agreements signed in Newfoundland and Labrador	6
.....	6
Roles of Stewardship Agreement Signatories	7
Section 2: Conservation Area(s) in Corner Brook	8
Section 3: Policies for Habitat Conservation	12
a. Incorporate your Stewardship Agreement into your Municipal Plan	12
b. Refer all possible developments to the Wildlife Division	12
c. Keep riparian buffer areas intact	12
d. Form a committee	13
e. Understand Fish and Wildlife Enforcement	14
Section 4: Habitat Conservation and Education Strategies	16
Explore grants and funding	18
Hire a Green Team	19
Find and place geocaches	19
Construct trails & put up interpretive signs	20
Watch wildlife	21
Build roosting and nesting structures for bats and birds	22
Construct islands	23
Help Corner Brook residents enjoy nature	24
Explore outdoor education programs	24
Conclusion	25
Appendix 1- Signed Agreement	26

Section 1: Habitat Conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador

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 that habitat conservation could help increase waterfowl populations, in 1986 Canada and the United States (later followed by Mexico) signed the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP, nawmp.wetlandnetwork.ca). Joint ventures' were established across North America to achieve the objectives of NAWMP. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) committed to its participation in the **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV)** in 1989.

Today, **EHJV (ehjv.ca)** partners continue to conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat for all 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 and Land Resources (Wildlife Division). Other NL partners include SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities), Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (a branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada), and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

As its primary contribution to the EHJV in NL, the provincial Department of Fisheries and Land Resources created a habitat stewardship program to help municipalities conserve important wildlife habitat found within their planning boundaries. Stewardship Agreements are signed with municipalities so that when land use decisions are made, wildlife habitat will not be forgotten. Since 1993, over forty municipalities have signed Habitat Stewardship Agreements in NL. Having now signed its own Stewardship Agreement, the City of Corner Brook protects an important link in a network of conservation areas in NL and indeed, across North America.

Map of Habitat Stewardship Agreements signed in Newfoundland and Labrador



Roles of Stewardship Agreement Signatories

The Province: The NL Department of Fisheries and Land Resources, through its Wildlife Division, are expected to:

- Write a Habitat Conservation Plan in consultation with the Town (this plan)
Work with the town to review any developments which are proposed 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 includes assisting with wildlife and habitat conservation education, restoration, or enhancement projects such as those discussed in Section 4.

The Town: The City of Corner Brook and its Mayor and Council are expected to:

- Ensure that the Stewardship Agreement and the Habitat Conservation Plan are appropriately incorporated within the Town's next Municipal Plan (**see Section 3a**)
- Protect the designated Conservation Area(s) from destruction or degradation. The town must contact the NL 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 (**see Section 3b, c**)
- Implement, over time, as capacity allows, the Habitat Conservation Plan in the community with the assistance of the NL EHJV partners (**see Section 3 b, c, d, e, and Section 4**)
- Educate residents, staff and development planners about the agreement, the Habitat Conservation Plan and their respective responsibilities in relation to it (**Section 3 b, c, d, e and Section 4**)
- Participate, as capacity allows, in the activities of SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc- **see Section 3f**)

Section 2: Conservation Area(s) in Corner Brook

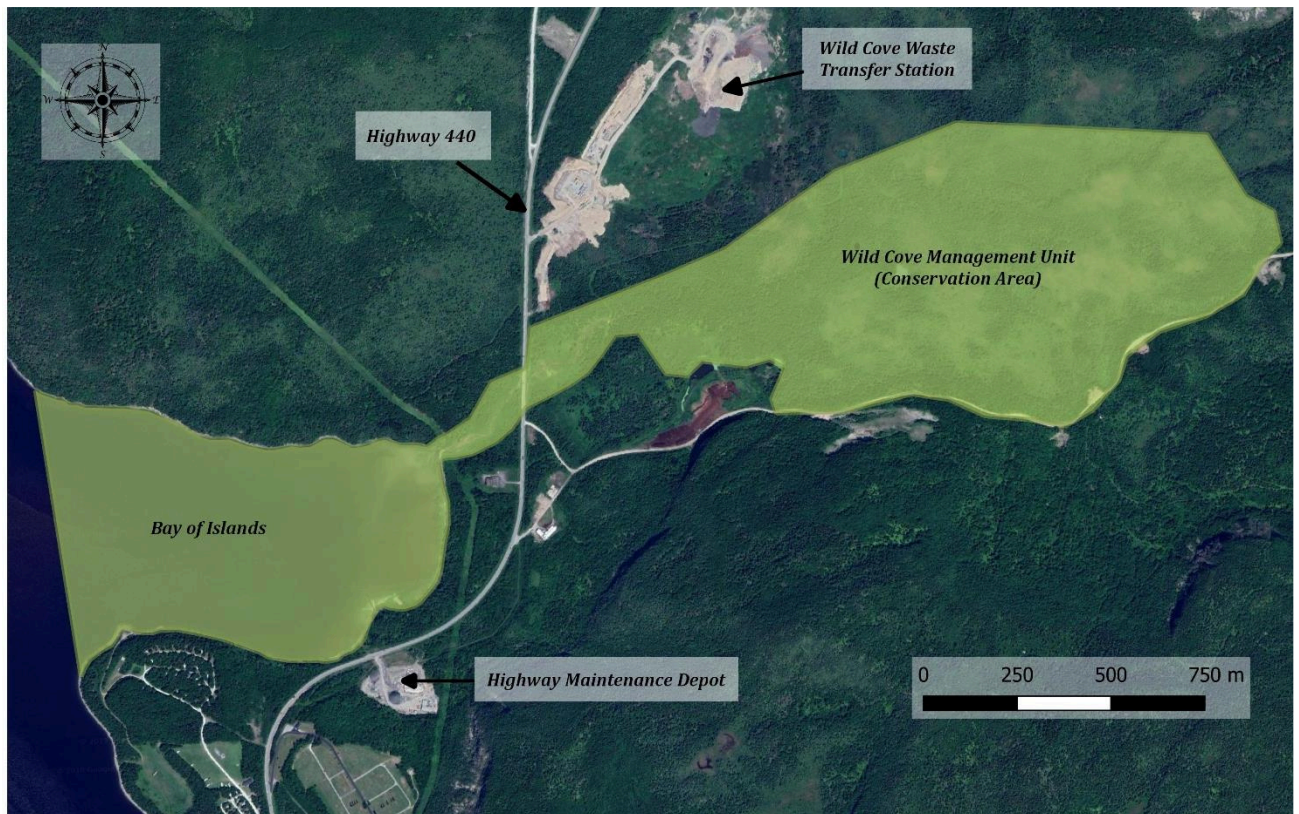


Figure 1: Map of Wild Cove Conservation Area in Corner Brook. The conservation area encompasses the Wild Cove fen, Wild Cove Stream (with 15m land based buffer on either side of the stream), and the delta region of the stream's outflow into the Bay of Islands.

Summary

Located at the mouth of the Humber River in the Bay of Islands on the west coast of Newfoundland, Corner Brook is a city of nearly 20,000 people. Amalgamated January 1st, 1956 from the four townships that settled the area (Curling, Corner Brook West, Corner Brook East, and Townsite), the City now serves as the service centre for Western Newfoundland, as well as being the administrative headquarters of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nations band government.

Field assessments of wildlife habitat found within the planning boundaries of the City showed that several areas of significant pond, fen, and riverine habitat were good candidates for inclusion within a stewardship agreement. In December of 2018, Council signed a Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement which will

conserve what is now known as the Wild Cove Conservation Area., thereby formalizing the City’s commitment to habitat stewardship.

Wild Cove Conservation Area

Located along the North Shore Highway (Hwy 440), the Wild Cove Conservation Area protects approximately 169 hectares of important wildlife habitat in Corner Brook. Found to the east of the Wild Cove Waste Transfer Station, the Conservation Area’s boundary follows the existing municipal land zoning designations, with the southern access road forming the southern boundary (note that the road is excluded from the Conservation Area). The Conservation Area is composed of both a large expanse of the fen itself, Wild Cove Brook, and the outflow and estuary habitat into the Bay of Islands. A 15metre land-based buffer is to be maintained along the coastal portion of the Conservation Area and along the riparian habitat of the Wild Cove Brook portion.

The land-based portion of this Conservation Area is currently zoned Environmental Conservation, while the 15m land-based buffer along the coastal portion is zoned Environmental Protection. The area to the northwest of the Conservation Area is zoned Solid Waste/Scrap metal; the boundaries of the Conservation Area avoid impacting the Waste Transfer Site (formerly the landfill site/disposal site) as well as the Genesis Organic site.



In the coastal portion of the Conservation Area, Wild Cove itself, it is common to see a wide variety of avian species, including Greater Scaup, Bald Eagles and a various gull species. The online database eBird maintains a list of the species recorded in and around Corner Brook.

Figure 2: Bald eagle

Further inland, a rare calcareous fen is home to several rare plants Rattlesnake Root (*Prenanthes racemosa*), Northern Bog Aster (*Symphyotrichum boreale*), and Showy Ladyslipper (*Cypripedium reginae*). Both Rattlesnake Root and Northern Bog Aster are formally designated as provincially Endangered, in that their only known occurrences in the province are found in Wild Cove fen and the Balls Pond area. The known occurrences of these plants expands beyond the boundaries of the

Conservation Area, particularly to the north and the east of the area, and as such future management decisions may need to be made to maintain the integrity of this surrounding area to comply with existing species at risk related legislative requirements. Specifically, the provincial and federal Species at Risk legislation prohibit the disturbance of at risk species and their habitat and provide for the development of recovery plans for designated species.



Marsh and stream habitat in the Wild Cove Conservation Area.
Photo by Wildlife Division, 2010



(Left) Rattlesnake Root (*Prenanthes racemosa*) Photo by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009. **(Right) Northern Bog Aster (*Symphyotrichum boreale*)**. Photo by John Maunder, 2003.

Existing Land Use and Its Potential Impact on Wetlands and Wildlife

Wild Cove Waste Transfer Site and the Genesis Organics Composting Site

The Conservation Area is bordered to the north by the Wild Cove Waste Transfer Site, a commercial operation which accepts a range of residential and business wastes, including yard waste, scrap metal, household hazardous materials, off the road tires, construction or demolition wastes, electronic waste, and garbage waste. If not managed appropriately, waste disposal sites can pose a significant threat of leachate, which can cause toxins and non-biodegradable substances to enter the environment. In 1992 and 1993 the BEAK Consultation engineering group completed reports on the environmental impacts of the Wild Cove Landfill Site and of the former Genesis Organics Composting Site. These reports concluded that allowing the leachate to escape from the sites would potentially result in environmental damage, and that runoff from bark leachate in the composting site was the likely cause of water changes actually observed in the surrounding streams, including Wild Cove Brook. These reports also included recommendations to lessen that impact. Both of these recommendations (to landfill waste at the northern edge rather than the southeastern portion of the site and to construct a collection ditch capable of rerouting the runoff) were implemented shortly thereafter.

As of the time of writing, there have been no further reported concerns about leachate in the area, and it is not considered to be a significant risk. Local staff members from Municipal Affairs and Environment's Water Resources Management Division monitor water quality in the fen four times a year. As of the time of writing the department does not recommend further action be taken beyond the regularly scheduled monitoring work, though every effort should be made to ensure that there is no increased degradation to the water quality of the site.

Domestic Wood Cutting

The Wild Cove Conservation Area is found in Domestic Cutting Area C1514. This overlap creates the potential for domestic wood harvest to occur within the conservation area, though the nature of the vegetation found there (mostly scrub, some productive forest) means that is it unlikely to be a significant target for harvesters.

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 Stewardship Agreement into any resulting Municipal Plan or related Master Plan. The Conservation Area(s) **shall be zoned Open Space Conservation, Environmental Conservation, Environmental Protection, 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).

b. Refer all possible developments to the Wildlife Division

Development activities proposed to occur within the Conservation Area 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 Conservation Area(s), **Council will first consult with the NL EHJV Program Manager** (at the Wildlife Division (Department of Fisheries and Land Resources) providing a 30 day notice period.

c. Keep riparian buffer areas intact

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, although there are exceptions allowed under the Act. The City should build awareness of and adherence to this crown land reserve designation by all residents and businesses. This means, unless granted under the Lands Act, 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 is the minimum protection around all waterbodies and marsh areas and is critical within the Conservation Area(s).



Healthy riparian buffer surrounding an urban stream. Staff photo.

d. Form a committee

Following discussions with members of Council and staff, we recommend that the City of Corner Brook establish a committee that, as part of its mandate can help you carry out some of the initiatives described in this plan. This could be called a *Wildlife Committee, Environment and Trails Committee, Advisory Committee on the Environment, or Habitat Committee* but you are free to choose the name that suits your town and residents best. Usually these committees are chaired by a Council member, which helps this group maintain their connection to the City, but are comprised of appropriate community groups, individual volunteers and city staff.

Sometimes an existing Recreation Committee or Trails Committee takes the lead on projects relating to the Stewardship Agreement. In our experience a dedicated committee can raise the profile of the habitat conserved by your agreement and increase public support. You may also choose to reserve a spot 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 709 637-2971.

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.

f. Participate in SAM

Since the City of Corner Brook has signed a Habitat Stewardship Agreement with the province, it is invited to participate as a 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 conservation issues. SAM maintains a public page about your agreement at samnl.org/membership featuring maps, photos, facts, and information on local attractions. Please link to this page from your town's website; this will help increase residents' understanding of the Stewardship Agreement, your areas, and our programs.

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 connects you to like-minded municipalities and link you to resources and training. Municipalities also enjoy hosting meetings 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 that could be implemented over time in the community. They are not mandatory but it should be understood that experience has shown that 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.

Potential Future Habitat Conservation

Initial field assessments and conversations with the City indicated additional valuable wildlife habitat areas which could potentially be considered for future inclusion within an expanded Corner Brook Stewardship Agreement.

One central example of this is the Hughes Brook Estuary and its associated riverain habitat. The area was identified as having high potential for future conservation and habitat enhancement projects. The area is primarily within the planning boundaries of the City but small portions lie within the Town of Hughes Brook and the western bank of the river lies with the Town of Irishtown-Summerside. Conservation of the area would present a prime opportunity for collaboration between the communities on the restoration of a now older trail and boardwalk system. Significant historical conservation effort occurred in the area through MUN- Grenfell Campus including the release of salmon in the brook. The outer mouth of the estuary represents a relatively rare example of salt/fresh marsh habitat in NL.

The map below (Figure 2) shows an initial scan of the areas that could be considered for such a conservation project. They include the waterway itself and the riverine environments on either side of the delta

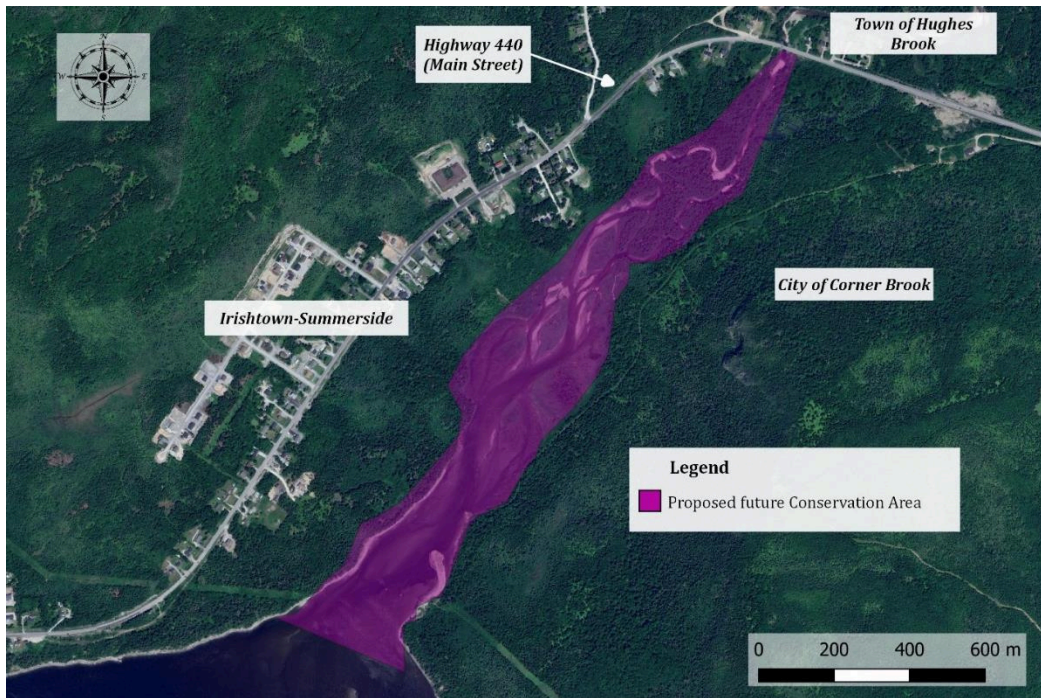


Figure 3: Map of proposed future Conservation Area around Hughes Brook.

Local partnerships

The opportunities for local partnerships within Corner Brook are extensive. In addition to the presence of multiple conservation minded non-profit groups, there are several SAM communities on the west coast of Newfoundland. Steady Brook, Deer Lake and Stephenville Crossing are all active participants in SAM activities and frequently engage in enhancement projects; they could potentially make excellent partners for local projects and events. SAM would be glad to work with the city to help build these partnerships.

The Humber Natural History Society (HNHS) is a non-profit organization centered in Corner Brook that promotes the enjoyment, protection, and education of the natural history resources in Humber Valley and the surrounding areas. They organize various events, educational talks, and field trips throughout the year, and are instrumental in long-term citizen science monitoring projects such as the Christmas Bird Count. For more information on their upcoming events please visit their Facebook page ("**Humber-Natural-History-Society**") or contact them by email at humburnaturalhistorysociety@gmail.com.

ACAP Humber Arm is a non-profit group that works in the Bay of Islands and the Humber Valley coastal regions in western Newfoundland. With focuses on the quality of marine and freshwater resources, marine species and invasive species, habitat protection and restoration, and knowledge mobilization, ACAP Humber Arm is a community leader in the integrated management of aquatic issues. For more information on their work and upcoming events please refer to their Facebook page ("**ACAP Humber Arm**").

The Western Environment Centre (WEC) is an environmental organization that aims "~~work collaboratively with people~~, including industry and government groups, to accomplish environmental goals." They frequently host and facilitate workshops, talks, and community projects. With several projects focused on food sustainability such as community gardens, composting, and public policy and climate change, they would be an excellent partner for the City to work with. For more information on the work they do, as well as a summary of their past and upcoming events, visit **wecnl.ca**.

The Corner Brook Stream Development Corporation (CBSDC) is a non-profit community development agency that aims to maintain and develop the public walking trail systems within the city, including the supporting infrastructure such as walkways, pedestrian bridges, viewing platforms, and rest areas. For more information or to consult their 2012 Master Plan, refer to their website at **cbstream.com**.

Corner Brook is also home to a passionate and growing mountain biking community whose members routinely participate in trail building, maintenance, and clean up activities. With the increasing popularity of mountain biking in ecotourism, developing more and better infrastructure for it in partnership with groups such as those formed by Cycle Solutions (a cycle shop located on West Street) could help make Corner Brook a world class mountain biking destination. Information regarding trail ~~maintenance~~ can be found through the Facebook group ("**Trail Watch**").

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 and Land 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.

Many geocaches already exist in the City of Corner Brook. SAM and the EHJV partnership (username **EHJV_Stewardship**) currently maintain over 30 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. The mountain biking community in Corner Brook is also active in trail building and maintenance, and would potentially be excellent partners moving forward.

While there is some interpretive signage along the trail system, the ever-expanding network of trails offers an opportunity to improve upon the existing infrastructure. Signs that are out of date or faded from exposure to the elements should be refurbished or replaced, and new signs should be erected in areas where there currently aren't any in large areas.

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 City of Corner Brook has been provided with a large highway road sign and can be provided an interpretive sign suitable for trail entrances. Additional interpretive signage could possibly be funded through grants to the City of Corner Brook; for example, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation often funds trail and park projects (see funding opportunities link above for other possibilities)



Corner Brook's Stewardship Agreement Road Sign. Staff photo

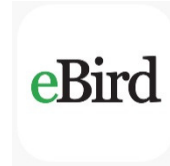
Watch wildlife

Local groups and interested volunteers can watch and monitor birds, plants, and wildlife in all areas of the Town and especially in wetlands (includes ponds and marshes). 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.

Explore all the birds seen in Newfoundland and Labrador (click map to zoom to your area) at **ebird.org/ebird/canada/subnational1/CA-NL?yr=all**

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.

Create artificial habitat

Build roosting and nesting structures for bats and birds

A variety of roosting and nest structures can be built, installed, monitored, and maintained for other bird species such as Tree Swallows, Northern Flickers, Great Horned Owls, Northern Saw-Whet Owls, and bats. Providing nesting boxes for Tree Swallows may increase their population in the area, which can help with natural insect pest control. Providing structures for predatory birds may also help reduce

populations of undesirable birds (e.g. American Crow, European Starling) and rodents while increasing biodiversity.

Installing nest boxes and roosting structures is exciting, but takes time, commitment and maintenance; see samnl.org/resources for details.



Bat Box with dimensions. Staff photo.

Construct islands

Many wildlife species, such as terns and waterfowl, nest and loaf on islands due to a reduced risk of predation from land-based predators, so constructing islands can help increase their populations. These structures can be constructed simply from wooden cribs (Tamarack / Larch would be an appropriate choice for building material), measuring approximately 4 m² that have been filled with rock and soil.

The islands must be positioned so that they are higher than the highest water mark. Hardy shrubs (e.g. alder, willow) must be planted on the islands to provide cover and to prevent occupancy from gulls. Take care to prevent the use of toxic

construction materials (e.g. treated wood, contaminated soils) and disturbance to plant and animal communities. samnl.org/resources has various free plans for islands and artificial nesting sites.

Help Corner Brook residents enjoy nature

It's not just kids that enjoy the outdoors – adults and seniors benefit from time in nature. 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. Themes such as winter tracking or edible plant hikes can increase interest. Hikes can be inexpensive ways for adults in Corner 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. Corner Brook's Winter Carnival and Nuit Blanche celebrations offer fantastic opportunities for environmental and stewardship outreach. Residents will already be attending the festivals, so turnout is likely to be higher. Outdoor family activities are affordable, interesting, and appropriate for all ages. SAM staff can help - either by attending, training some of your residents, or by providing resources that you can use.

There are excellent wetland education programs that can be adapted for activities in Corner 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

Backyard Habitat for Canada's Wildlife

This initiative from the Canadian Wildlife Federation (cwf-fcf.org) is administered by the Wildlife Division's Salmonier Nature Park (709 229 7888). The program offers inexpensive suggestions on how to make life better for wildlife and often includes a bird nesting box workshop as well.

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. Remember, community involvement is the true strength of a Stewardship Agreement!

Appendix 1- Signed Agreement

Page 1 of 4

Municipal Stewardship Agreement for The City of Corner Brook

THIS AGREEMENT made at Corner Brook, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, this 17th day of December, 202018

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

- of the one part -

AND: **THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORNER BROOK**, a municipal corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* (herein called the "The City")

-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 (EHJV);

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 wetlands and associated wildlife habitats within The City be protected and enhanced through and with the cooperation of The City in accordance with this Agreement and a Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereafter;

AND WHEREAS The City 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 Management Unit (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule A annexed hereto) shall be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement including any Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereunder for better protection of the wetlands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

2. Within the limits of its jurisdiction, The City shall permit only those activities within the Management Units that have no negative or adverse impact upon the wetland habitat or the waterfowl or other wildlife which utilize those habitats.

3. The parties may establish other Management Units as may be desirable from time to time. The Management Units shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Conservation Plan developed to enhance and protect the wetland habitats, the waterfowl and other wildlife which utilize those habitats.

4. The Habitat Conservation Plan shall be developed in cooperation with The City and the Minister agrees to provide such advice and expertise necessary or advisable for the development of the Habitat Conservation Plan.

5. The City agrees that in the preparation of a Municipal Plan for The City or any amendments to any existing Municipal Plan, the areas designated as Management Units shall be recommended by The City 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 City 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 Management Unit(s) shall do so in consultation with the Minister and in keeping with the principles of this Agreement.

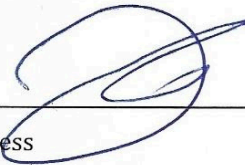
6. The parties to this Agreement, their consultants, servants or agents, shall have and exercise reasonable rights of access to the Management Unit(s) for all purposes necessary or incidental to this Agreement and in particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, for the purpose of developing and carrying out the Habitat Conservation Plan.

7. 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.

8. 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 the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources in the presence of:

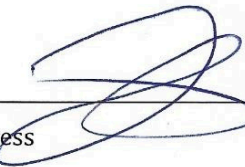


Witness

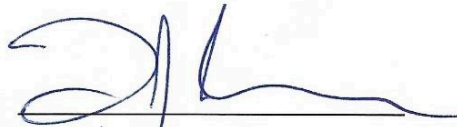


**THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER OF
FISHERIES AND LAND RESOURCES**

THE SEAL OF the Council of The City of Corner Brook hereunto affixed in the presence of:



Witness



**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CORNER BROOK**