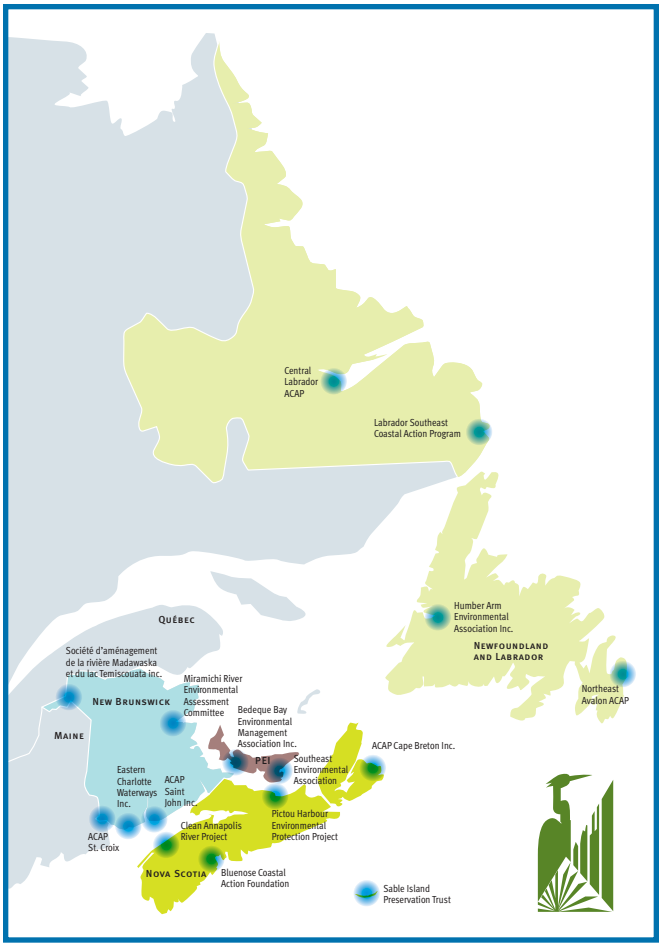
Atlantic Coastal Action Program

Year in Review 2006/07
Advancing Environment Canada's Strategic Outcomes

Environment Canada | Environnement Canada

Canada

The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) is a unique community-based program initiated by Environment Canada in 1991 to help Atlantic Canadians restore and sustain local watersheds and adjacent coastal areas. There are currently 16 ACAP organizations in the four Atlantic Provinces; each one is an incorporated, non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors, full-time paid Executive Director and office. Each organization operates independently and is formally linked under the regional umbrella of ACAP. The work of ACAP



organizations is made possible through project funding from a variety of sources including Environment Canada, with the majority of the direct financial and in-kind support coming from other federal government departments, provincial and municipal governments, local businesses and community partners. Local communities also support individual ACAP organizations through volunteer labour and in-kind contributions.

The ACAP program recognizes that local organizations are the most effective champions to achieve environmental sustainability in their own communities. By empowering communities and taking on a holistic approach towards protecting and conserving the environment, ACAP organizations and their partners have achieved numerous successes.

Delivering on Environment Canada's Strategic Outcomes

Most of the work done by the 16 ACAP organizations produces results that deliver on Environment Canada's strategic outcomes. Each year the organizations submit an annual work plan that is designed to meet the collective objectives of each ACAP organization and the priorities of Environment Canada.

Canada's natural capital is restored, conserved and enhanced

Recovery of Roseate Terns and Ipswich Sparrows

The Sable Island Preservation Trust, Nova Scotia

Sable Island, a federally owned Migratory Bird Sanctuary, is located 180 km off the coast of Nova Scotia. As many as 28 species of birds breed on Sable Island, including two federally listed Species at Risk: the Roseate Tern and the Ipswich Sparrow.

Since its inception, the Sable Island Preservation Trust has conducted or supported bird study projects on Sable Island. In 2006/07, in cooperation with the Department of Biology of Dalhousie University and the Canadian Wildlife Service, a multi-year science project plan was prepared for monitoring the breeding population of Roseate Terns and Ipswich Sparrows. This plan will help identify and ensure that critical habitats receive proper protection.

ACAP FACT

In 2006/07, 16 ACAP organizations carried out 59 projects.

Through this project, the breeding population of the Ipswich Sparrow studied in spring of 2006 indicated a population between 6,700 and 6,800. The results indicate an increase over the population of 6,000 birds identified in 1998.

Initial Investigation of the Environmental Health of Kelligrews River

Northeast Avalon ACAP, Newfoundland and Labrador

The Kelligrews River system flows through a community that is under increasing pressures associated with population and development growth. Northeast Avalon ACAP proposed to investigate if this increase in activity around the river was having an impact on the overall health of the river system. By focussing on the health of fish that live in the Kelligrews River, this two year research project shed light on the impacts of upstream industrial activities on downstream aquatic environments.

The health of the fish, as well as water and sediment samples, were used to provide indicators of the overall health of the river system. While conducting field work and carrying out further site visits to monitor activities within the watershed, pollution offences were reported to regulatory agencies. As a direct result of this reporting and increased awareness, the Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Environment and Conservation is in the process of establishing a neighbourhood environmental committee to work together on improving the area and protecting the watershed.

Applying Sampling Protocols for Terrestrial, Freshwater, and Brackish Aquatic Systems

ACAP Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

ACAP Cape Breton implemented an integrated monitoring program that used existing sampling protocols to monitor terrestrial, freshwater and brackish ecosystems. This integrated monitoring program is useful for providing information to federal, provincial and local authorities responsible for environmental protection and nature conservation. This allowed ACAP Cape Breton to collect baseline data unique to the area.

Using the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network's protocol, ACAP Cape Breton implemented a terrestrial ecosystem monitoring program in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. This forest biodiversity survey will help determine if any measures are required to preserve the biodiversity of the forests in the future. A tree species database was created to monitor the health of Cape Breton forests in the future. Biology students at Cape Breton University will conduct surveys over the next ten years as part of an environmental biology lab. These surveys will help track any negative changes to species diversity within the forests.

ACAP FACT

Environment Canada contributed a total of $1,128,000 to ACAP sites in 2006/07.

ACAP sites planted 3,500 trees and seedlings within various landscapes across the Atlantic provinces.

The Canadian Aquatic Bio-monitoring Network (CABIN) protocol was used to monitor the health of three freshwater ecosystems in differing conditions within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

An Estuarine Health Assessment Program developed by ACAP Cape Breton and other groups was used to monitor the health of six brackish ecosystems in Eastern Cape Breton.

A total of 25 volunteers were trained and involved in these monitoring programs.

Weather and environmental predictions and services reduce risks and contribute to the well-being of Canadians

Water Movement

Humber Arm Environmental Association, Newfoundland and Labrador

Water is one of our greatest natural resources and ensuring a clean and continuous water supply is an environmental priority. In order to preserve and protect our water supply we must understand how various bodies of water respond to environmental incidents such as oil spills, untreated sewage discharges and other effluent discharges.

ACAP Humber Arm's 2005 *State of the Harbour* report identified the lack of information on surface currents in the Humber Arm as a major knowledge gap.

With an increase in marine traffic in the Humber Arm, information on surface currents is crucial in predicting the spread of a potential spill or discharge. By understanding the way contaminants may move during a catastrophic event, the local community can prepare to protect and preserve this important resource throughout the Humber Arm.

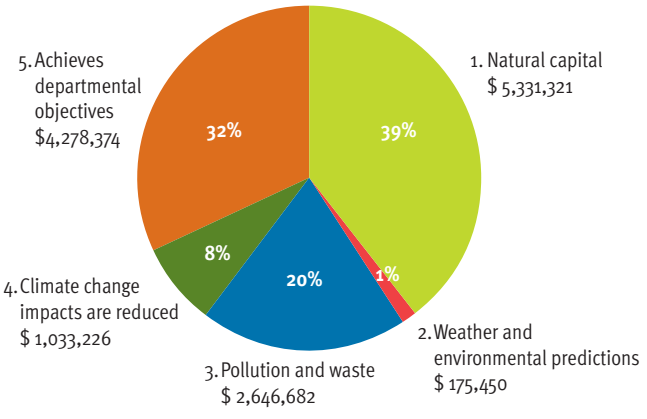
Through this project the Humber Arm Environmental Association used buoys, devices to document surface currents within Humber Arm in an effort to increase the understanding of surface circulation patterns and to assess the potential pathways of harmful substances and organisms.

ACAP FACT

Over 2,500 water conservation kits were distributed to local households in Humber Arm, NL to foster good water management practices.

ACAP sites levered over $4.25 for each $1 contributed by Environment Canada.

PROJECT FUNDING BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME



Canadians and their environment are protected from the effects of pollution and waste

Reducing the Effects of Pollution and Waste in Greater Saint John

ACAP Saint John, New Brunswick

Saint John, New Brunswick is a municipality that is on the verge of re-defining its position and strategies for pollution and waste management. Two substantial issues include the ongoing practice of discharging untreated municipal wastewater (sewage) into the urban watercourses, and the problems associated with illegal dumping of solid wastes. ACAP Saint John plays a pivotal role in addressing both these issues. The group has assumed the role of community liaison in dealing with the appropriate regulators, managers and politicians to effect change.

ACAP FACT

There are 16 ACAP sites located across Atlantic Canada.

ACAP Saint John has achieved its primary (and founding) mandate of unifying the community behind the Saint John Harbour Cleanup initiative. Specifically, it was one of the key stimuli behind the tri-level government funding announcement of $80 million dollars on March 16, 2007.

In addition to working with its partners to secure the necessary funding for the Saint John Harbour Cleanup Initiative, ACAP Saint John coordinated seven cleanups in greater Saint John, involving 352 volunteers; removed more than 33 tonnes of litter, debris and illegally dumped materials from the urban environment and held 21 information sessions.

Monitoring and Remediation

St. Croix Estuary Project Inc, New Brunswick

The St. Croix Estuary Monitoring and Remediation Program is designed to help protect local citizens and their environment from the effects of pollution and waste and to lessen the impacts of climate change in the Quoddy Region of New Brunswick.

During 2006/07, staff and volunteers conducted a water sampling program at 15 sites between St. Stephen and St. Andrews and carried out sampling at remediation sites along the St. Stephen Waterfront.

In 2004/05, under this annual monitoring and remediation program, areas in downtown St. Stephen were flagged as having excessively high *E. coli* counts. St. Croix Estuary Project took the results to stakeholder meetings and the Town of St. Stephen. The town then committed to clean up these outfalls and in February 2007, announced the completion of this work.

Staff from the St. Croix Estuary Monitoring and Remediation Program gave presentations to the St. Stephen Town Council and held discussions with various stakeholders on the benefits of remediation.

Montague Nutrient Study

Southeast Environmental Association, Prince Edward Island

Over the past two years, the Southeast Environmental Association has conducted a monitoring program to gain a better understanding of the overall health of the Montague estuary. Like most estuaries on PEI, the Montague estuary suffers from nutrient enrichment which causes excessive amounts of sea lettuce to grow, depriving the water of much needed oxygen. Without adequate levels of oxygen, fish and other organisms are unable to survive.

ACAP FACT

Over 3,000 students and youth participated in soil and water sampling projects, environmental education, outreach and engagement initiatives.

412 compact fluorescent lights were installed in 13 Prince Edward Island businesses reducing their overall emissions.

This monitoring program represents the first phase of a larger management program to improve the overall health of the estuary. By understanding the water quality, and evaluating human activities taking place around the watershed, the Southeast Environmental Association can more effectively design future activities which will improve the health of the watershed.

The information will also provide a baseline of data allowing the organization to monitor the ecological impact of any future programs. It will also provide a foundation for engaging stakeholders and promoting stewardship that can lead to solutions alleviating the nutrient loading problem in the watershed.

To date, the data collected in both the freshwater streams and the estuary of the Montague-Valleyfield watershed has shown the following:

- There is a correlation between nutrient concentrations and land use; agriculture, residential dwellings, wetlands and forests all play a role.
- There is a relationship between stream runoff and plant growth of the species Ulva Lactuca (sea lettuce).

Further studies will clarify the linkages between land use and nutrients.

The impacts of climate change on Canada are reduced

The Impacts of Climate Change are Reduced

The Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association, Prince Edward Island

Climate change is of concern to all Canadians; however, the unique geography of Prince Edward Island makes the island particularly vulnerable to the future impacts of climate change. This reality motivated the Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association to actively address the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The association began an extensive plan aimed at the overall reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through education, behavioral change, monitoring and innovation. In 2006/07, the Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association worked with local businesses to educate and assist owners, managers and staff to make simple changes that have a significant influence in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

ACAP FACT

Total value of all ACAP projects in 2006/07 – $4,815,763.

Through this program, work was done with 13 businesses to develop energy and water conservation plans, 98 employees were trained in energy and water conservation techniques for business and at home, and a seven hour eco-efficiency workshop was held with 39 people in attendance.

The association estimates that a total of 58,100 pounds of carbon dioxide were not released into the atmosphere as a direct result of replacing 412 standard light bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent lights (CFL).

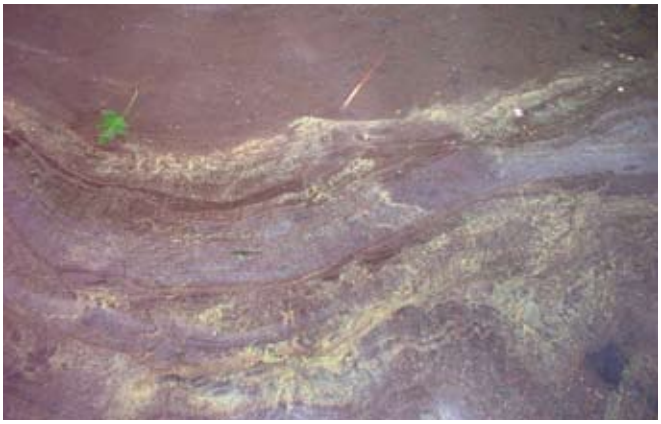
Climate Change in Madawaska

Société d'aménagement de la rivière Madawaska et du lac Témiscouata, New Brunswick

Since one of the four principal objectives of the Société d'aménagement de la rivière Madawaska et du lac Témiscouata is environmental education and outreach, it is important to address the climate change issue. The local community must be aware of all aspects of this current issue and play an active role by modifying its energy use habits that have an impact on climate change.

The Société d'aménagement de la rivière Madawaska et du lac Témiscouata has given 13 workshops (12 on the environment and one on climate change) in three summer camps and eight classrooms. The topics include basic concepts as well as local repercussions on a provincial and regional scale.

Nine thousand five hundred (9,500) copies of the *Le Verveine* newsletter, in which an article on climate change was published, were distributed to residents in four municipalities.



Active Transportation in Bridgewater

The Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation, Nova Scotia

The Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation is using a three pronged approach to encourage the use of active transportation throughout the Town of Bridgewater, consequently decreasing the town's green house gas emissions.

Through 2006/07, the Foundation worked diligently to increase public awareness, develop an active and safe routes map for the town, and create a sustainable program that encourages active transportation as a social norm and a government priority within the town.

Through the work of a 10 member advisor committee, three presentations were delivered to Bridgewater Town Council with one shown on local TV Cable 10. Presentations were also delivered to the Bridgewater Development Association, the Youth Action Committee for the Town of Bridgewater, Michelin Social Club, and the Bridgewater High School Environment Club. The committee also hosted two active transportation workshops with approximately 100 people in attendance – one specifically targeting youth and the other more general public.

The Town of Bridgewater Municipal Council passed a motion that all future infrastructure projects and new development within Town limits would be screened using an active transportation lens.

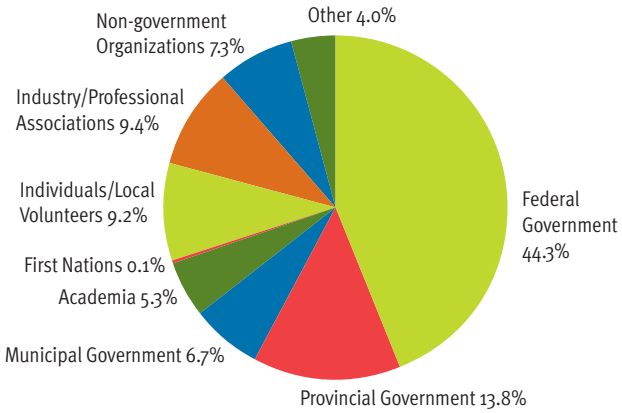
Active transportation information was presented to members of the health sector as well as those involved in sport and recreation, and made publicly available through the Town of Bridgewater's Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture.

ACAP FACT

Over 275 presentations made to 1,100 citizens, local stakeholders, and students.

Hundreds of volunteers contributed time, energy, and expertise in 2006/07.

FUNDING PER SECTOR



Contributes to achieving departmental strategic objectives

River and Air Watch

The Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee, New Brunswick

River Watch and Air Watch are the Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee's community flagship programs. These programs provide community members with a local point of contact to share and highlight any environmental concerns.

Using the well advertised number 1-800-56RIVER for River Watch, citizens are able to connect with the Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee to bring water related concerns to the forefront. Upon receiving a call expressing concern about an environmental occurrence, staff record the details for file and, depending on the nature of the call, either investigate directly or forward the call to the appropriate government agency.

Having delivered this program for nine years on the Miramichi, much of the community now looks to the Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee for this service. The Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee aims to keep the original caller for each file updated on the progress and outcome of their reported occurrence. Several hundred files are now recorded in the annals of the River/Air Watch Program. Some were false alarms, while others have occupied staff and volunteers for years.

Working with Clam Harvesters

The Clean Annapolis River Project, Nova Scotia

Fifty years ago, the Annapolis Basin produced approximately 60% of the soft-shelled clam harvest in Nova Scotia. In recent years, the resource was reduced to one-tenth of historical levels, arguably as a result of environmental pressures from land-based sources of marine pollution and continued demand for a shrinking resource.

In an effort to address the issues facing the industry the Clean Annapolis River Project formed the Annapolis Watershed Resource Committee. This multi-stakeholder committee is working to support the rehabilitation and sustained management of the clam industry and other resources. The committee is chaired by the Clean Annapolis River Project and is made up of a number of organizations including the Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre, Bear River First Nation, Digby County and Annapolis County clam digging associations, clam buyers, and representatives from all levels of government.

ACAP FACT

Over 1,100 local volunteers throughout Atlantic Canada received training and/or participated in a variety of ACAP projects.

Campaign Against Illegal Dumping

Eastern Charlotte Waterways, New Brunswick

Illegal dumping is the disposal of waste items in areas other than a sanitary landfill. Most illegal dumpsites in Charlotte County are found in forested areas where they impact wildlife habitat, health, safety, water quality, tourism and property values. To address the growing number of illegal dumpsites, Eastern Charlotte Waterways and its partners – the South West Solid Waste Commission and the New Brunswick Departments of Environment, Local Government and Natural Resources – started the Campaign Against Illegal Dumping in the spring of 2005.

ACAP FACT

Over 1,000 water and sediment samples collected across the Atlantic provinces for various monitoring programs.

Over 35,000 hours of volunteer time dedicated to advancing ACAP initiatives.

In the first year of the campaign, 50 illegal forest dumpsites were documented and mapped. The 2006 Campaign Against Illegal Dumping continued to spread the message of the environmental, social and economic impacts of illegal dumping. Eastern Charlotte Waterways staff visited local schools to discuss illegal dumping with children; posted signs asking people to stop illegal dumping; and audited major dumpsites before and after key "dumping" weekends.

One of the main achievements of the 2006 campaign was the creation of a revised telephone book insert listing the proper places to dispose of waste items. The insert is fully accessible to the public through Eastern Charlotte Waterways' website and can be picked up from select businesses in the county.

Along with ongoing promotional and educational efforts, Eastern Charlotte Waterways also completed the remediation/clean-up of an illegal dumpsite along the Fraiser Beach Road in Mascarene. The clean-up was conducted to create an economic benchmark, allowing Eastern Charlotte Waterways to estimate the cost of cleaning up future sites. Staff visited a number of other reported dumpsites throughout the fall to assess them and to assign a clean-up cost based on the Fraiser benchmark.

Other notable achievements

Welcome to ACAP, Labrador!

In 2007, Environment Canada was pleased to welcome two additions to the ACAP family. The Upper Lake Melville Environmental Society is centered in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area of Labrador, and the Labrador Southeast Coastal Action Program is located on the southeast coast.

For the past few years Environment Canada has been gathering public input and examining the environmental issues throughout Labrador to determine the best location to establish ACAP. Considerations included the diverse culture of Inuit, Métis, Innu and European descendants, the number of species-at-risk, and the increased industrial development in the coming years which may cause stress on local ecosystems. Some of the socio-economic challenges facing Labrador like its large land mass and small human population, as well as its geographical isolation, also needed to be factored into any decisions regarding the establishment of ACAP. Our analysis found that ACAP was welcomed in many communities and that locating two sites in Labrador – one each in the central and south coast regions – would be more appropriate than just one.

Since the new sites were announced in the spring of 2007, there has been a flurry of activity to get the groups up and running in both locations. With executive directors hired and guided by volunteer boards of directors, the community-based visioning process and identification of priority sustainability issues has begun. We look forward to learning what the communities decide will be the key issues of focus in 2008/09.

ACAP Humber Arm Wins Gold at Canadian Geographic Awards

Congratulations to members of ACAP Humber Arm who took first place in the Environmental Learning category at the 2007 Canadian Environment Awards, sponsored by Canadian Geographic. The group received the honour at a national awards gala in Montreal on June 4, 2007. The award was granted for ACAP Humber Arm's long running Trading Books for Boats program which provides grade nine students throughout the Bay of Islands and Humber Valley with hands-on environmental learning. The students spend a day in the classroom learning about marine issues, followed by a day on the water learning how to take water quality samples. The award includes a one page feature on the organization in Canadian Geographic and McLean's magazines, and a $5,000 prize; which will be invested back into the Trading Books for Boats program.

Labrador Southeast Coastal Action Program

For more information on the Atlantic Coastal Action Program, please contact:

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This web site provides information on ACAP and links to the 16 organizations:
www.atl.ec.gc.ca/community/

The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) – Year in Review 2006/07

April 2008

Catalogue No:
ISBN: En1-42/2007E-PDF 978-0-662-48472-1

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre:
Plan d'assainissement du littoral atlantique – Bilan de l'année 2006–2007

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