Environment Canada Environnement Canada

Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative

Year in Review 2008/09

Canada

About the Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative Year in Review

Environment Canada's Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative consists of two programs: the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP), a unique community-based partnership program between Environment Canada and 16 multi-stakeholder community organizations in the four Atlantic provinces; and a program with regional coalitions whose work positively impacts larger ecosystems within the Gulf of Maine, the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy.

Both programs support initiatives that use local and regional expertise, and support people and organizations working in their own communities and regions to help build a better environment for Canadians.

This Year in Review demonstrates how the Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative programs are achieving tangible environmental results for Canadians by delivering on Environment Canada's strategic outcomes.

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 that 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 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 substantive volunteer labour and in-kind contributions.

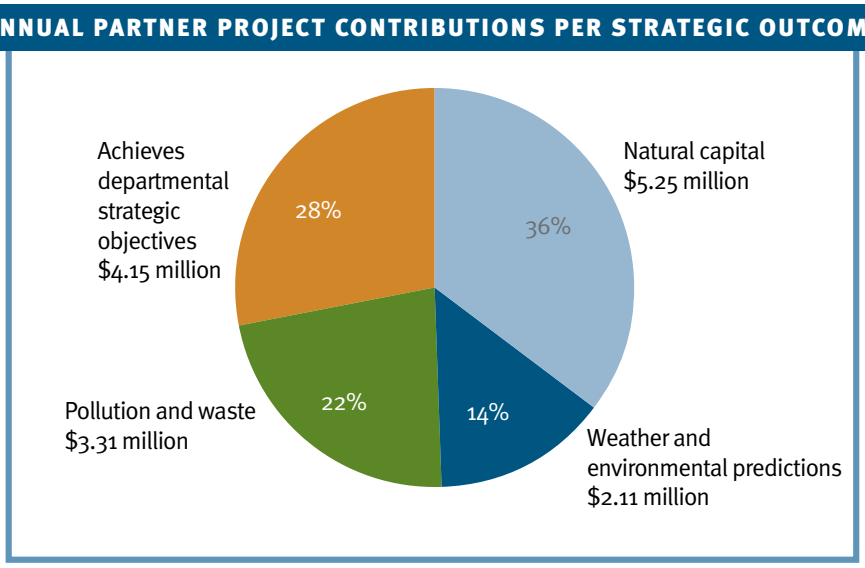
ACAP recognizes that local organizations are the most effective champions to achieve environmental sustainability in their own communities. By empowering

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.

ANNUAL PARTNER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS PER STRATEGIC OUTCOME



Environment Canada Strategic Outcome:

"Canada's Natural Capital Is Restored, Conserved and Enhanced"

Draft Watershed Management Plan for the Montague/Valleyfield River Systems

Southeast Environmental Association, Prince Edward Island

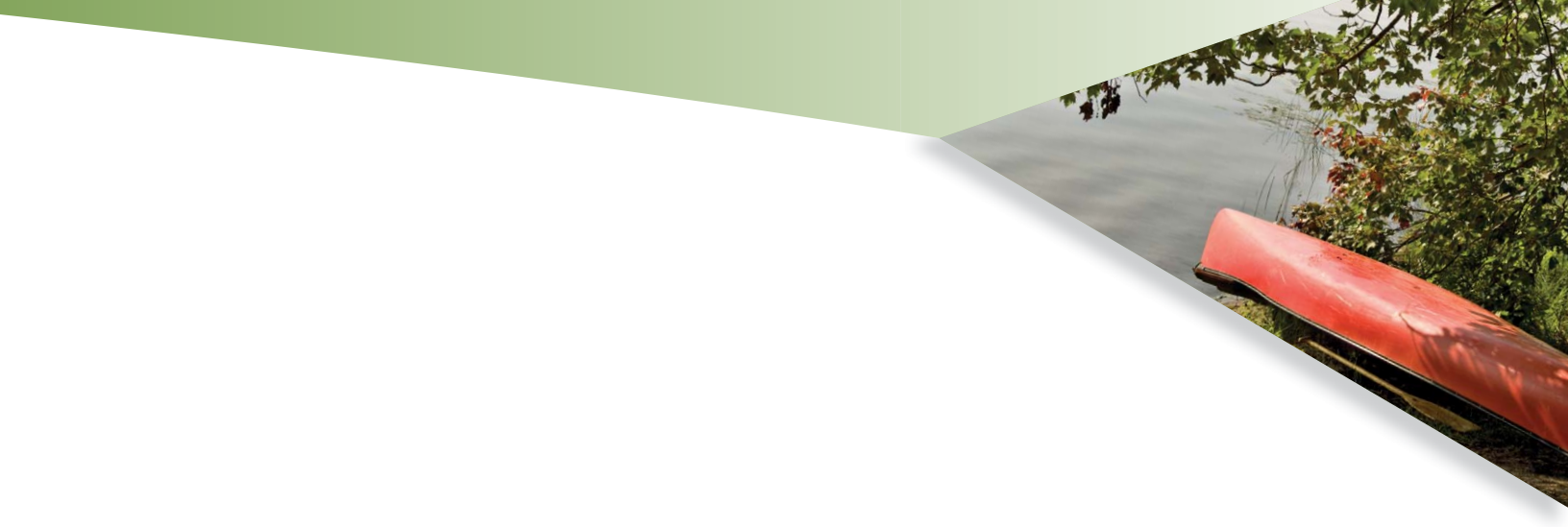
ACAP FACT

Fifty-nine projects were carried out in the 2008/09 fiscal year with a total value of over $4.5 million.

In January of 2009, the Southeast Environmental Association began the community approval stage in the development of a draft watershed management plan for the Montague/Valleyfield River systems.

The Montague/Valleyfield Watershed Management Planning Group hired a contractor to guide them in the development of goals, objectives and management strategies. They wanted to ensure that the draft management plan addressed the concerns of residents and stakeholders and reflected the input from the community meetings. Once this process was completed, the Watershed Planning Group developed 7 goals, 14 objectives and 43 management strategies. When the Watershed Planning Group was satisfied that they had addressed all the issues and concerns, they took their draft plan to the local community for feedback with public meetings held in the communities of Iona, Heatherdale and Montague.

Completing a watershed management plan, with full community support, is an ongoing process that cannot be rushed. The most important tenet of community environmental action is that both the decisions and actions taken are done for the benefit of, and at the direction of, the community. The Watershed Planning Group and the Southeast Environmental Association believe that a successful, community-endorsed watershed management plan for the Montague/Valleyfield watershed is not only necessary, but absolutely achievable.



Kennedy Lakes Protected Natural Area Management Plan

Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee, New Brunswick

The Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee (MREAC) is a community-based, multi-stakeholder organization dedicated to the continual improvement of environmental quality of the Miramichi River ecosystem with emphasis on the Miramichi watershed. This watershed encompasses approximately 23% of the province of New Brunswick land mass (approximately 13 400 sq. km) and contains significant freshwater and estuarine habitats.

In support of the protection and restoration of the Miramichi watershed, MREAC staff and volunteers participated in a series of conferences and workshops and completed monitoring work through the Community Aquatic Monitoring Program. One particular focus for MREAC during 2008/09 was the continued development of the Kennedy Lakes Protected Natural Area (PNA) Management Plan.

The Kennedy Lakes PNA Management Plan is 1 of 10 Protected Natural Areas established in New Brunswick in 2003. Progress was made toward a final draft of the Kennedy Lakes PNA Management Plan during the 2008/09 meetings. The main issue of concern for Kennedy Lakes is that the main portage access was becoming braided around wet areas. It was determined that a simple corduroy portage trail would prevent further environmental degradation.

With leadership from MREAC, and funding from the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources, the development of a cedar corduroy trail began with a scheduled completion date in the spring of 2009. Volunteers from the New Brunswick Community College, Miramichi campus and the canoeing community were also engaged in the construction of this trail.

ACAP FACT

The total value of Environment Canada's contribution to Atlantic Coastal Action Program projects in 2008/09 was $1.2 million.

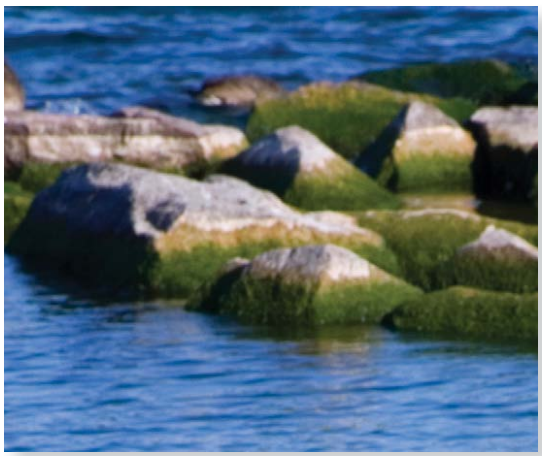
Blue-green Algae (Cyanobacteria)

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

The watershed of Lake Témiscouata and the Madawaska River (3000 sq. km) flows into the Saint John River, which empties into the large marine ecosystem that is the Bay of Fundy/Gulf of Maine. This watershed has a population of approximately 33 000 people on both sides of the Canada/United States border. Edmundston, located at the mouth of the Madawaska River, is the main urban centre.

The Société d'aménagement de la rivière Madawaska et du lac Témiscouata inc. (SARMLT) has been working to educate residents and businesses in and around the watershed about sustainable environmental practices, as well as recover and improve the watershed since 1991. In 2008/09, SARMLT once again took up the mantle of public education through its active involvement in determining the cause of an issue plaguing local lakes—the presence of cyanobacteria (Blue-green Algae) and researching existing reports on the phenomenon.

SARMLT discovered that no such reports exist for New Brunswick, so researchers turned to the Quebec department of the environment to gather the relevant information. With the information in hand, SARMLT developed an information pamphlet on the topic and helped the Lakes Environmental Committee (Baker, Caron et Unique) produce a brochure entitled « Sauve ton lac! » ("Save your lake!") for local residents.



The brochure addressed a number of issues and questions in an attempt to educate and inform residents. The brochure answered everything from the question, "What is Blue-green Algae?", to what residents can do to address the problem.

Quoddy Ecosystem Initiative – Resource Inventory

Quoddy Futures Foundation, New Brunswick

In 2008/09, the Quoddy Futures Foundation set out to increase stakeholder understanding of the Quoddy Ecosystem and awareness of changes taking place over time, as well as to identify significant marine communities. This was not a small undertaking, but Quoddy staff and dedicated volunteers were eager to take up the challenge.

Quoddy staff and volunteers surveyed and monitored 27 sites for seepages, storm drains and open sewers. They collected samples to measure for bacteria and intertidal species. Bacteriological samples were collected and processed to determine the E. coli and total coliform counts and basic chemical parameters (pH, ammonia, phosphate, nitrate, etc.) were also recorded and reported. An intertidal beach survey was also conducted at selected sites around the Quoddy Ecosystem to catalogue the plants and animals appearing from high to low tide. This type of survey can help to determine adverse impacts.

This organized water resource inventory identified a new problematic site at the St. Andrews Wharf where untreated sewage was clearly being discharged through storm drains. As a result, the Town of St. Andrews verbally committed to meet to discuss the site and contacted Quoddy for further consultation regarding other environmental concerns in the Town. These findings also initiated discussions with the New Brunswick Department of Environment regarding combined sewage overflows.

Another 13 sites in the Quoddy Ecosystem were inventoried for Species at Risk and alien invasive species; species groupings were also recorded at the same time. The data collected was entered into a mapping application and made available on the Internet to support decision making. And, at his request, the collected information was delivered to the Honourable Greg Thompson, Member of Parliament.

ACAP FACT

Throughout Atlantic Canada, a total of 353.6 kilometres of shoreline were improved/restored and 48.7 tonnes of waste were diverted.

Annapolis Water for the Future Project

Clean Annapolis River Project, Nova Scotia

ACAP FACT

The ACAP story was heard throughout Atlantic Canada thanks to 816 articles, 23 042 outreach materials, 15 radio spots and 127 media interviews and articles.

The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) continued in its efforts in 2008 to protect and restore its local watershed through the Annapolis Water for the Future Project. The purpose of the project was to build an Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) plan. The project was completed in two phases. The first phase focused on early implementation actions.

Early implementation actions focused on strategies that responded to identified problems, which built a constituency of support among policy makers and citizens for IWM. In pursuit of this measure, CARP worked in cooperation with several partners and specialized programs to support the enhanced management of on-site water and wastewater systems. The second phase of the project focused on activities to support the development of options for the IWM of the Annapolis watershed. CARP staff engaged in a number of activities including literature searches and first-person interviews, the establishment of a coalition of professionals and agencies interested in developing IWM in Nova Scotia, a multi-day workshop to develop options for IWM, and preparation of a report to secure shareholder engagement.

This work resulted in the adoption of two IWM plans in the area; the participation of 200 communities; and the engagement of approximately 600 residents through meetings, specific environmental activities and best management practices for homeowners.

Environment Canada Strategic Outcome:

"Weather and Environmental Predictions and Services Reduce Risks and Contribute to the Well-Being of Canadians"

Feasibility Study of Geothermal Powered Generation Using Mine Water

ACAP Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

The history of mining in Cape Breton is a troubled one. A boom and bust industry, mining operations left an indelible environmental mark on the landscape. Today, though, the residents and businesses of Cape Breton are focused on moving on from the past, to create a better environmental future in and around the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens Site. ACAP Cape Breton is moving forward by exploring new technology. They undertook a project to study the feasibility of using water from the now defunct mines under Sydney and Whitney Pier to supply geothermal power to the local Cape Breton Miners' Museum.

ACAP Cape Breton worked with partners to determine the project parameters including optimal site location and annual expected output. In collaboration with the study consultants, ACAP Cape Breton staff and volunteers examined the reliability of the proposed technology for the application and estimated the required capital investment and annual operational expenses. The study included a comparison of the financial implications of the Miners' Museum's existing systems versus the proposed geothermal source integration; it estimated the total annual cost to the Museum as well as expected monthly energy delivery. ACAP Cape Breton also collected information on the detailed geothermal data and estimated hot water production at well sites.

The geothermal potential of former mine workings is extraordinary in Cape Breton and Glace Bay in particular. The transformation of existing fossil fuel energy sources to a new energy garnered through geothermal workings would accomplish not only significant energy savings over the long term for organizations such as the Miners' Museum, but would also lead the way for positive climate change processes for Cape Breton in general. ACAP Cape Breton's involvement as a partner and leader in this technological revolution strengthens their position in the community and significantly improves the organization's knowledge and skills capacity to assist and partner with other similar projects in the future.

Bridgewater Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study

Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation, Nova Scotia

The Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation's (BCAF) watershed boundaries include the coastline from Indian Point to the LaHave River estuary and inland to include the LaHave River and Mushamush River watersheds. The Towns of Mahone Bay, Lunenburg, Bridgewater and New Germany all fall within these boundaries. A valued member of Lunenburg County since December 1993, BCAF's organizational goal is to promote the restoration, enhancement and conservation of the local ecosystem through research, education and action.

Working with the Town of Bridgewater, BCAF staff and volunteers designed a program to help the Town track its greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Through a simple Excel spreadsheet and with information from an extensive literature review in hand, BCAF and the Town of Bridgewater accurately measured the amount of GHGs being produced.

This activity resulted in the Town's proactive decision to install light-emitting diode (LED) lights in all of its buildings, signal lights and street lights. This resulted in an impressive 25% reduction of GHG emissions and other pollutants from the Town's infrastructure.

BCAF made several public presentations on the topic and worked closely with the Sustainability Coordinator for the Town to organize and implement a presentation schedule. This widespread education campaign resulted in a community call for a public transportation system for the western region which would further reduce GHG emissions and promote sustainable transportation options.

ACAP FACT

The use of sustainable transportation resulted in 10% reductions of both individuals removed from roads (per kilometre) and of removal of single occupant vehicles in one Nova Scotia community alone. Alternative modes of transportation include carpooling, public transportation, biking and walking.

Climate Change Impacts Project

Pictou Harbour Environmental Protection Project, Nova Scotia

ACAP FACT

ACAP employed/ trained almost 300 youth throughout Atlantic Canada.

Climate change is an issue that affects all Canadians. Coastal communities tend to be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, most notably sea level rise and storm-surge. With this reality in mind, the Pictou Harbour Environmental Protection Project (PHEPP) undertook an ambitious project in 2008: they set out to research the potential impacts of climate change on Pictou Harbour and its surrounding communities.

Through field investigation and sampling, stakeholder consultation, document research and analysis, and consultation with different levels of government, PHEPP undertook six project activities:

- Sea level rise and subsidence
- Storm-surge, wind, wave and ice climatology
- Storm-surge and meteorological modelling
- Ecosystem impacts
- Adaptation to sea level and climate change in the Pictou Harbour Estuary
- Public consultations to draft a preliminary adaptation strategy

While the amount of information required to complete a full investigation resulted in PHEPP listing the project as "incomplete," their efforts to educate local community members, businesses and political figures made a true impact. Communities, businesses and municipal leaders who were unfamiliar and unconcerned with climate change in their community began to take notice. Some of the results realized from the study include the engagement of 11 businesses in best management practices; the employment/training of 11 youth; the participation of 14 communities; three degraded areas addressed and beneficial uses restored; and the diversion of two tonnes of waste.

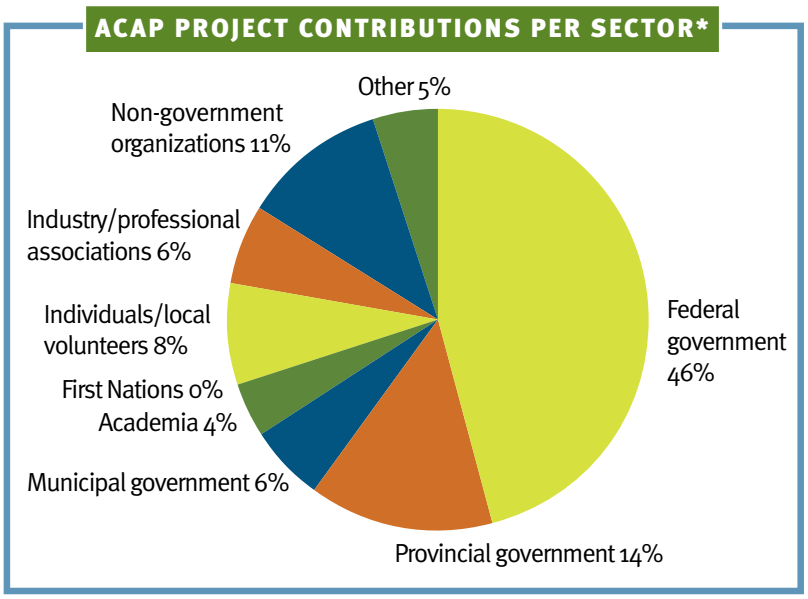
Environment Canada Strategic Outcome:

"Canadians and Their Environment Are Protected from the Effects of Pollution and Waste"

Municipal Green Plan – Village of Blacks Harbour and Town of St. George

Eastern Charlotte Waterways, New Brunswick

Eastern Charlotte Waterways (ECW) makes its home in the picturesque south-western region of New Brunswick. As its name implies, ECW undertakes projects that fall within the watershed of Charlotte County. ECW assists industry and government in understanding how good environmental conditions support healthy communities and quality of life in an equitable way for all citizens of a region. ECW assists communities in a bottom-up approach to foster an environment that provides good jobs and living spaces for all. In 2008/09, ECW once again lent its assistance to local government through the first of a two-year strategy to develop municipal green plans for the Village of Blacks Harbour and the Town of St. George.



* in-kind and cash

The first stage of the development of green plans for Blacks Harbour and St. George focused on research. ECW staff and volunteers looked at environment programs and green plans in other municipalities and contacted the City of Fredericton to gain a better understanding of the green planning process. After that research was complete, ECW developed an online audit for each municipality and developed a survey to gauge the awareness and understanding of certain environmental issues by municipal staff and council. ECW then gathered information regarding the municipalities' assets and existing environmental initiatives and staff met with representatives from St. George and Blacks Harbour to audit municipal office buildings.

The result of this year of study and partnership development was a commitment by the Village of Blacks Harbour and the Town of St. George to continue with the program and develop a municipal green plan for each municipality in 2009/10. The ultimate goal of this entire effort is to encourage meaningful action regarding climate change impacts and the management of solid waste.

Terrestrial and Aquatic Conservation Enhancement and Monitoring in the Bedeque Bay Watershed

Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association, Prince Edward Island

The Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association's (BBEMA) territory is on the south shore of Prince Edward Island, primarily in east Prince County. It includes the watersheds of the Dunk, Wilmot and Bradshaw rivers as well as the coastal area around the Bedeque Bay, from Union Corner to Seacow Head, including the City of Summerside and its harbour. BBEMA continues to make great environmental strides within its local watersheds through the strength of its partnerships, and 2008/09 was no exception.

BBEMA partnered with the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre in New Brunswick and the Central Compost Facility in Prince Edward Island to develop a new experimental project: the effectiveness of plastic mulch and compost on promoting soil fertility, reducing weed competition and promoting overall tree growth for agro-forestry applications. The project—part of an ongoing three-year study—is located within the Maple Plains Agro-forestry Site and consists of 108 trees planted within 18 study plots. These trees were measured (diameter at base, height of longest lead) to compile baseline indexes to monitor yearly growth rates.

BBEMA staff also worked with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to spread the word about its Community Aquatic Monitoring Program (CAMP), which offers guidance for community groups to monitor the health and marine productivity of their local water ecosystem. BBEMA provided CAMP information and training sessions for two Mi'kmaq groups and the Kensington North Watershed Group.

Environment Canada Strategic Outcome:

"Contributes to Achieving Departmental Strategic Objectives"

Wood's Island Environmental and Cultural Inventory

ACAP Humber Arm, Newfoundland and Labrador

Encompassing 12 communities surrounding the Humber Arm–Bay of Islands region, ACAP Humber Arm has three overarching goals: to see the marine ecosystem restored to a healthy and productive state; to foster a community sense of ownership for the marine coastal area; and to promote the sustainable use and development of the marine resources and the coastal areas in the Bay of Islands.

In their ongoing mission to see these goals fulfilled, ACAP Humber Arm completed significant work in 2008/09. During this period four staff members received shoreline classification training from Environment Canada and two staff members were trained in vegetation identification by forestry consultants. Significant field work was also completed through the year, resulting in the classification of an entire shoreline in accordance with Environment Canada's Systematic Cause Analysis Technique manual; the classification of inland sections by vegetative cover; and the georeferencing of historically significant areas (i.e. graveyards), trailways and infrastructure (i.e. cabins). Based on this information, ACAP Humber Arm produced maps and a report that was then shared with local municipalities and relevant provincial government departments.

Development of a Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan

Labrador Southeast Coastal Action Program, Newfoundland and Labrador

The past year was an important one for the Labrador Southeast Coastal Action Program (LSCAP) as staff and volunteers continued their efforts to finalize LSCAP's Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The design of a CEMP involves a thorough investigation of the critical issues affecting local resources, an assessment of the remedial options available to the community and a choice of options which best serve the environmental and socio-economic objectives of the community. CEMPs are intended to help guide the communities in the future management of their ecosystem, outlining expected time frames for implementation of plans and responsible stakeholders.

Over the course of 2008/09, community visioning sessions were completed and, in many cases, extended to meet with local community councils. This allowed for additional input, bringing the local government point of view to the table. The community profiles and data gathered during the visioning sessions were put into digital formats to allow easy access to the data and for future use.

To support its partner site in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, LSCAP hosted training sessions on various accounting procedures. A complete analysis of accounting practices was done and a reorganization of the books was completed to assist with the day-to-day operations of the group.

Development of a Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan

Central Labrador Environmental Action Network, Newfoundland and Labrador

In its bid to further the development of its Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan, the Central Labrador Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) was busy establishing partnerships and building its place with its local community in 2008/09.

CLEAN developed a community questionnaire, intended for distribution in 2009/10, to help develop an organizational vision. The development of community environmental profiles continued in 2008/09. Research has shown that while the environmental issues facing areas like Lake Melville are well documented, information for other areas (including Mud Bay and Sheshatshiu) is scarce and requires more research before a profile can be completed.

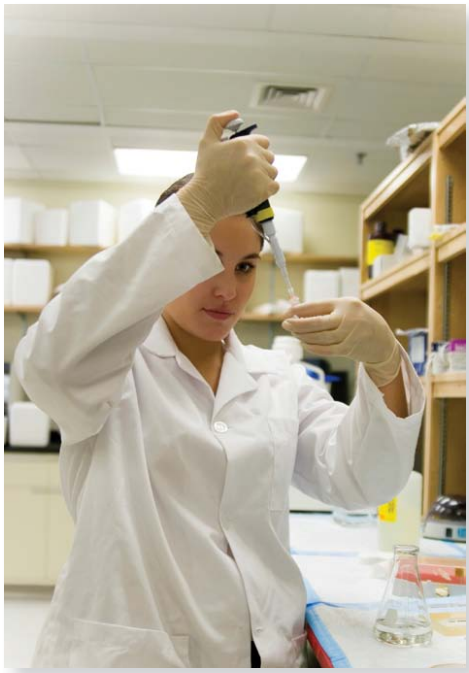
The establishment of CLEAN's place in the local community and relationship development with stakeholders remained a focus for the organization this past year. Relationships were deepened with organizations like the Labrador School Board. The school board contacted CLEAN about supporting their project idea involving elementary school children and tomato plants. CLEAN supported the endeavour and assisted in getting funding for the project from the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. As this relationship continues to grow, CLEAN may partner with the school board on bigger and more involved projects.

ACAP FACT

Approximately 400 communities participated in a large variety of projects and activities carried out by their local ACAP organization.

Science Linkages Corner

The Science Linkages Initiative is a program that creates partnerships between Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) organizations and scientists from Environment Canada. Together, the partners develop proposals, conduct scientific work of mutual interest, and report on results. Through these joint projects, Environment Canada scientists transfer their knowledge of scientific methods and practices to the ACAP organizations, while the organizations in turn provide valuable knowledge about local science needs and ecosystems. Another benefit of the Science Linkages Initiative is that all of the projects, either directly or indirectly, fit into Environment Canada's priorities and in many cases those of other federal and provincial departments. In this way the ACAP organizations help deliver on a large number of government programs and initiatives.



ACAP FACT

Over 2200 water quality, toxicity and pesticide samples were collected and analyzed throughout the four Atlantic provinces. Data is collected for local monitoring programs as well as Environment Canada initiatives such as the Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) and the Shellfish Water Quality Protection Program.

Biophysical Assessment of Urban Wetlands in an Industrial City

ACAP Saint John, New Brunswick

ACAP FACT

Over 2550 native trees and shrubs were planted along watersheds and within urban settings.

ACAP Saint John partnered with the New Brunswick Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Environment Canada, the City of Saint John and the Saint John Naturalists Club to conduct a biophysical assessment of wetlands in the greater Saint John region. Thirty wetlands were assessed for biodiversity, socio-economic use and physical parameters.

Through this project ACAP Saint John was able to enhance existing partnerships with many of their stakeholders. This resulted in ongoing discussions to enhance the wetlands database that will expand upon knowledge of the ecology and the commercial value of urban wetlands to the community, which will allow for not only better management but also a better understanding of wetlands within the City of Saint John. These new partnerships will provide opportunities for ACAP Saint John to expand its sphere of influence within the scientific community. The project also created the first comprehensive online database of biological, physical, social and economic characteristics of wetlands situated within the greater Saint John area. The database and final report were made available through ACAP Saint John's website.

Cyanobacteria Investigation in the Cochrane Pond Watershed

Northeast Avalon ACAP, Newfoundland and Labrador

This project focused on background research into the appearance of cyanobacteria organisms in the Cochrane Pond Watershed. Northeast Avalon ACAP (NAACAP) collaborated with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Provincial Water Resources Division to devise a thorough sampling plan. The sites chosen included a headwaters site and many test sites in the problematic area of study (mostly Paddy's Pond), as well as several sites downstream.

This investigation allowed NAACAP to adequately monitor the watershed and collect a great deal of background data. This is significant because this particular watershed had fallen "under the radar" in recent years and the new data was important to understand the environmental changes occurring in this heavily used watershed. Among other successes, a partnership with the provincial Department of Environment and Conservation was established due to their equal interest in monitoring the Cochrane Pond Watershed for cyanobacteria and their toxins. Additionally, much public awareness was raised regarding the issue; in fact a new public interest group in the Topsail Pond area was formed (Concerned Area Residents for the Environment – CARE), largely in response to the emergence of this bacteria in their watershed. NAACAP worked with them to develop information on this organism that was distributed to area residents; and to hold a public meeting on this topic. This project also supported the work of a post-secondary student (a previous NAACAP employee) who had undertaken a research project on this topic. NAACAP estimates that, through the work surrounding this project, they reached an estimated 1000 people.

Regionally Based Ecosystem Initiatives

In addition to the 16 Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) organizations funded through the Atlantic Ecosystems Initiative (AEI), the AEI also provides funding to three regionally based ecosystem bodies: the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership and the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability. These ecosystem bodies, by nature, address systemic issues in a larger, ecosystem-wide footprint than their ACAP counterparts.

The Canada–US Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment was established in 1989 by the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts to foster cooperative actions within the transboundary Gulf watershed. Its mission is to maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine and to allow for sustainable resource use by existing and future generations.

2008/09 highlights:

- As part of its work, the Ecosystem Indicators Partnership (ESIP)—a subcommittee of the Gulf of Maine Council—developed a fact sheet, introducing the 22 priority indicators for the six ESIP subcommittees: aquatic habitats, climate change, contaminants, coastal development, eutrophication and fisheries/aquaculture. Based on user feedback and comments on the ESIP Indicator Reporting Tool, datasets were added to the Reporting Tool to include eelgrass for Massachusetts and salt marsh layers for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine. In addition, an enhanced understanding of land-based activities on the coastal environment was accomplished through seven presentations using the prototype ESIP Indicator Reporting Tool. The focus for these activities included webtools, delivery of indicators and geo-referenced data as well as climate change information.

- Through its flagship educational outreach tool, *The Gulf of Maine Times*, the Gulf of Maine Council worked to increase environmental stewardship in the Gulf of Maine/ Bay of Fundy. Interest and readership of *The Gulf of Maine Times* remained strong with 11 500 paper copies distributed and 39 181 unique visitors to the *Gulf of Maine Times* section of the Council's website during a five-month period.

The Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership

The Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP) is a "virtual institute" open to individuals and groups that want to protect and enhance the health of the Bay of Fundy by promoting the integrity, vitality, biodiversity and productivity of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem, as well as the social well-being and economic sustainability of its coastal communities. The organization also facilitates communication and cooperation among individuals and organizations interested in understanding, sustainably using and conserving the resources, habitats and ecological processes of the Bay of Fundy.

2008/09 highlights:

- The Fundy Biosphere Reserve (FBR) was established and work continued with various stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to create awareness and provide a catalyst for cooperation between communities on conservation and sustainability projects within the FBR. These new initiatives will include work on the biodiversity of the region.

- Many BoFEP committees were active throughout the year, completing or starting research in a number of areas. Some examples include the continued research on fundamental questions pertaining to the conservation and protection of intertidal habitats critical to the population survival and health of migratory shorebirds in the upper Bay of Fundy; and new studies on lobster, sturgeon and striped bass, in the context of exploring effects of tidal power development in the Minas Channel. There was also a continuing monitoring study of nutrients in the water column in the

vicinity of salmon pens in an attempt to understand these contributions and possible impacts on the coastal ecosystem of the lower Bay.

The Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability

The Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability (the Coalition) is a multi-stakeholder regional body representing the parts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec that are within the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence ecosystem. The southern Gulf region is an important ecological, economic and socio-cultural region of North America. Communities along the Gulf coast depend on its resources for income and their quality of life. The Gulf region supports key ecosystems such as salt marshes, beaches, estuaries and forests. It provides critical habitat, including spawning, feeding and nursery grounds, for numerous land and marine species.

2008/09 highlights:

- The Coalition undertook a series of meetings and education sessions with two First Nations communities focusing on a variety of issues including climate change and land-use planning. On the issue of climate change, Coalition staff focused on the report "Climate change adaptation strategies for medicine gatherers in two Migmag communities of New Brunswick". The information collected was used to develop a recommendations report which identified various options for adaptation strategies and policies, in collaboration and with support from relevant government agencies, with respect to predicted environmental conditions to conserve traditional medicines. These climate change adaptation options were tailored to the realities of each First Nation community considering their current policies, vulnerabilities to climate change impacts, and risks to traditional medicines and their habitat. Similar activities were also undertaken for land-use planning.

- Efforts for the conservation of aquatic ecosystems also continued through Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Community Aquatic Monitoring Program (CAMP), as well as an online regional sustainability atlas. Since its inception in 2003, CAMP has become an important tool for monitoring the health of watersheds and estuaries in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. Information gathered through the program provides government agencies, community-based organizations and other stakeholders with the baseline data necessary to assess changes in the aquatic environment, help identify the cause and seek remedial action.

Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative Kudos!

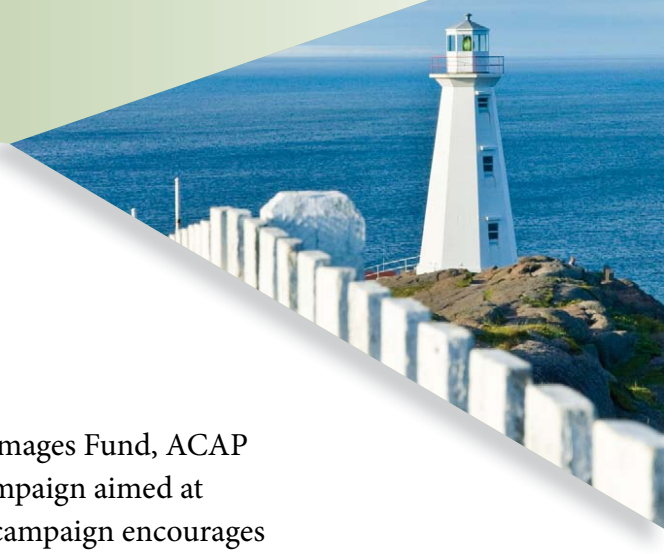
Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative organizations throughout Atlantic Canada continue to be recognized for their outstanding contributions to ecosystem health and environmental leadership in their communities.

The Clean Annapolis River Project received the Lieutenant-Governor's Greenwing Award for its role in wetland conservation and education in May 2008. The ceremony took place at the K. C. Irving Environmental Sciences Centre at Acadia University. Their 20 years of efforts in protecting salt marshes, freshwater wetlands and riparian habitats with stewardship agreements, restoration and enhancement of these valued ecosystems and their leadership role in public awareness programs won them this distinctive award.

The Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability was chosen as 1 of Aveda's 20 Regional Partners for 2008. Each year during the month of April, Aveda works to raise funds for grassroots organizations that protect biodiversity and address environmental issues around the world. The Earth Month campaign focuses on a specified environmental topic each year. The theme for 2008 was "Every Drop Matters" and the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability was chosen for this honour due to their ongoing efforts with the Community Aquatic Monitoring Program.

Interesting Happenings:

- Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) Cape Breton launched the region's first Eco Expo from October 24–26, 2008, showcasing environmental products, services and information at an event modelled after home and craft shows. It featured more than 30 booths displaying information and offering environmentally friendly products and services such as cleaning supplies, soaps and locally grown organic foods.



- With funding from Environment Canada's Environmental Damages Fund, ACAP Saint John and Uptown Saint John launched an anti-idling campaign aimed at reducing vehicle emission in the uptown area of the city. The campaign encourages drivers to turn off their vehicles if they will idle their car for more than 60 seconds, except if they are in regular traffic conditions.

- ACAP Cape Breton's Executive Director Eleanor Anderson was selected to attend the April 2008 Climate Project training session in Montréal, Quebec, as one of approximately 200 individuals who received The Inconvenient Truth Live Presentation training led by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore.

For more information on the Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative (AEI), please contact:
Environment Canada
Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative
16th floor, Queen Square
45 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth NS B2Y 2N6
Telephone: 902-426-8679
Fax: 902-426-6348

This website provides information on the AEI:
www.ec.gc.ca/nature/default.asp?lang=En&n=9DD947D8-1

Atlantic Ecosystem Initiatives – Year in Review 2008/09
March 2011

Cat. No.: En1-44/2009E-PDF
ISBN 978-1-100-17867-7

Aussi disponible en français