



Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)

**Celebrating the Successes
of Long-term
Community Partnerships**



Environment
Canada

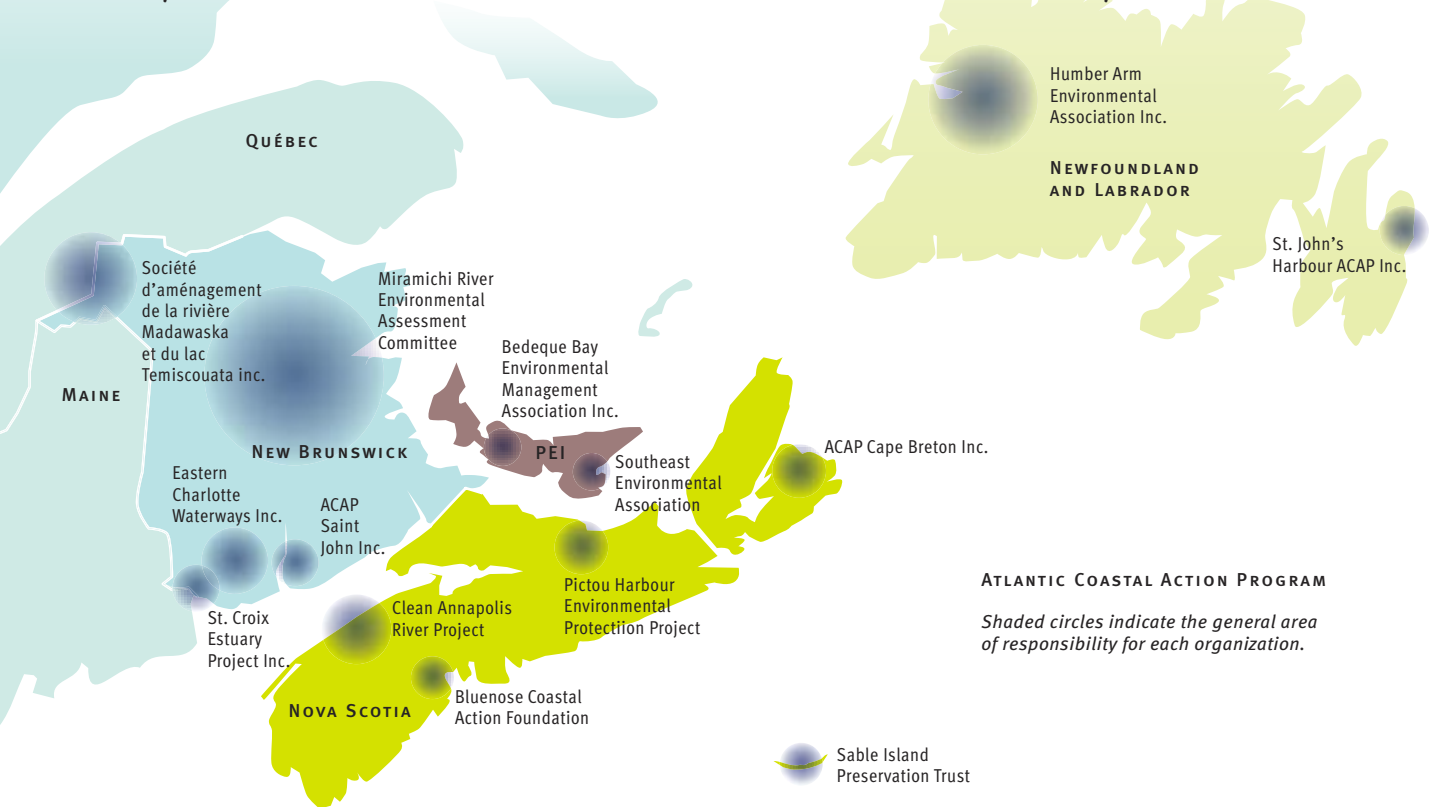
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The Story of ACAP

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 watersheds and adjacent coastal areas. ACAP recognizes that local organizations are the most effective champions to achieve sustainability in their communities. The ACAP family is currently made up of 14 organizations in the four Atlantic provinces. Each one of these non-profit organizations operates independently, but is formally linked under the umbrella of ACAP to represent a force stronger than the individual parts. Environment Canada and the ACAP organizations share the same goals and vision for the environment. Together they achieve much more than any partner could on its own.

By empowering communities and taking on a holistic approach towards protecting the environment, ACAP communities and their partners have achieved great successes. We invite you to celebrate them with us and learn more about the ACAP family of communities.





Community Empowerment & Sustainable Development

A Winning Combination

The St. Croix Estuary Project Inc. (SCEP), located in southern New Brunswick, has been promoting the wise management of the St. Croix Estuary and western Passamaquoddy Bay area since 1992. SCEP works in comprehensive environmental planning; environmental monitoring; land use, water use and resource mapping; and awareness and education projects. After a successful community fund raising campaign, SCEP purchased a property, locally known as Todd's Point, and preserved it as the Ganong Nature

Park. The property is named after Mr. Whidden Ganong, who decreed in his will that SCEP could purchase the property so they could fulfil his dream of turning it into a nature park to be enjoyed by the local community and future generations. The property consists of 330 acres of forest, field and intertidal zone. Impressively, it is the first community-owned nature park in the Passamaquoddy/St. Croix River area. The success of this project reflects SCEP's exceptional commitment to environmental preservation and the power of community engagement.

St. Croix Estuary Project Inc.



Eastern Charlotte Waterways Inc.

Eastern Charlotte Waterways Inc. (ECW) was established in 1993 to assess, monitor and remedy environmental issues in the L'Etang Harbour, which is located in southwestern New Brunswick. Historically, the area was an incredibly rich fishing ground including the largest commercial stock of soft-shell clams in southwestern New Brunswick. However, a variety of industrial activities dating back to 1967 eventually decimated the area. Through ECW's dedicated efforts, 174 acres of mudflat area in the L'Etang Harbour was re-opened for soft-shell clam harvesting in 2001. ECW had been

striving since its inception for this achievement. The success stemmed from numerous biological assessments, multi-partnerships between the community, industry, the three levels of government and non-governmental organizations, and an extensive public education campaign. ECW continues to conduct annual assessments and has an active role in ensuring the continued health of the watershed.

In the past 6 years of working with and coordinating projects with ECW, we have developed a close relationship to our clam industry and to our environment. This has proven the need for community involvement in areas that affect our jobs and resources.

**Wesley Lomax
President
Lepreau Clam Diggers Association Inc.**



Saint John is a bustling industrial and seaport community located in southern New Brunswick. ACAP Saint John Inc. was formed in 1992 to improve the environmental

health and integrity of the Saint John River Estuary and respond to the growing demand from local citizens to be more involved in environmental decision-making. One of ACAP Saint John's priorities is the remediation of the Marsh Creek waterway which runs through the heart of the community. The Creek has a long history of use and correspondingly, a long history of environmental abuse. Once a vibrant watercourse used for swimming and fishing, the Creek is now contaminated with creosote, litter and raw sewage. Along with its partners, ACAP Saint John has taken the initiative to develop a long-term plan to restore the Creek to a healthy state. They have undertaken studies to determine the extent of contamination, biological assessments, litter clean ups and remediation efforts to remove creosote from the bottom of the Creek. Their efforts will lead to a watercourse that is once again a source of pride for the community, a healthy ecosystem and a boost to the area's economy.

ACAP Saint John has become a critical and respected component of the city's environmental community and the province's environmental network. Being a community based organization, ACAP Saint John is very solution oriented. Rather than taking the typical adversarial position, ACAP Saint John has very successfully brought the partners to the table to create mutual understanding, cooperation and respect. Their success should be a model for other community based environmental groups to follow.

Bill Borland
Director, Environmental Affairs
J. D. Irving Limited

ACAP Saint John Inc.



Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee



The Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee (MREAC) formed in 1989 and joined the ACAP family in 1993 to tackle the environmental issues of the Miramichi watershed and estuarine environment located in central New Brunswick. MREAC's goal has been to develop awareness among the region's citizens that their quality of life is intrinsically linked to their environment. In 2000, MREAC played a lead role in addressing a serious erosion problem that had been damaging fish habitat and clouding the lower nine kilometres of the Little Southwest Miramichi River for at least three decades. Anglers and local

residents alike were looking for a solution to this problem. The erosion site was called the Cave-In; the river current was rushing straight into the riverbank and exploding into an extensive layer of silt/clay material that was immediately swept away by the current. MREAC addressed the problem by obtaining funding from multiple sources for an innovative engineering solution. In August of 2000, the river ran clear for the first time in memory for many of those involved.





Société d'aménagement de la rivière Madawaska et du lac Temiscouata inc.

The Société d'aménagement de la rivière Madawaska et du lac Temiscouata inc. (SARMLT) was established in 1992 to improve the quality of the environment along the Madawaska River and Lake Temiscouata watershed that spans the New Brunswick/Quebec border. As part of a recreational-tourism plan, SARMLT manages an interprovincial linear park in partnership with Quebec stakeholders. Interprovincial Linear Park Petit Témis stretches 63 kilometres from Edmunston, New Brunswick

to Cabano, Quebec. Since its creation, it has generated an astounding \$4.6 million annually in economic returns for the area. The group projects an increase in the number of annual users from 40,000 (currently) to 75,000. With the support of the municipal, provincial and federal governments and additional partners, SARMLT is poised to become a shining example of leadership in the areas of conservation, education, development and planning.

Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association Inc.



The Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association Inc. (BBEMA) was established in 1992 to address the environmental issues of the Bedeque Bay watershed on the south shore of Prince Edward Island. The most important issues facing the watershed are soil erosion, water quality, lack of public awareness, and the loss of natural habitats. BBEMA's Maple Plains Agro-Environmental Demonstration Site addresses all of these issues simultaneously. Since the signing of a 15 year stewardship agreement with a local farmer, who continues to farm the property, BBEMA has promoted and operated the site to illustrate

how farming can be practiced in harmony with nature. The 174 acre site is open for educational tours, research, and monitoring projects. It is used as an agro-environmental museum to display riparian buffer zones, wetland ponds, bog conservation, hedgerows and a variety of sustainable agriculture practices. Maple Plains has been a truly cooperative project with over 30 partners involved to date.





The Southeast Environmental Association (SEA) was established in 1992 to address the environmental issues of six watersheds in the Cardigan Bay region located on the southeast corner of Prince Edward Island. SEA's main issues are land degradation, surface water quality and forest management. In 2001, SEA entered into a partnership with the Atlantic Veterinary College to manage the tourism, visitation, science camps and merchandise sales at the Cardigan Water Science Centre. The site, located on the Cardigan Fish Hatchery property, includes interpretive hiking trails and a U-fish facility. The Centre increases SEA's visibility within the community and promotes its cause. As well, it stimulates economic development in the area, because it is a popular tourist destination. People from as far away as Argentina have experienced the thrill of catching a trout, while at the same time learning about the environment and what we must do to sustain it.

Community based management is an open and transparent process that leads directly to the formation of a truly integrated management plan. The approaches used by the Southeast Environmental Association and the Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association provide a way of bringing people together to relate their views prior to taking action in the form of management decisions. It is a proactive approach, with a broad vision.

Delephina Keen
Oceans and Habitat Biologist
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Southeast Environmental Association



Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation

The Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation (BCAF) was formed in 1993 to address environmental issues in the watersheds located in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia. The organization concentrates on habitat protection, pollution prevention and environmental implications of resource use. Its Clean Boating campaign has been instrumental in addressing the issue of raw sewage discharge into coastal waters by recreational boaters. To accomplish this, BCAF has established three sewage pump-out facilities. This is a significant

pollution prevention initiative since there are very few similar facilities on mainland Nova Scotia. BCAF has also undertaken an extensive educational campaign to spread the word on environmentally friendly boating practices. As a result of this program, boaters have properly disposed of 48,440 litres of raw sewage during the first three years of the facilities' existence.





Clean Annapolis River Project

The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) has been a part of ACAP since its inception in 1991. The organization focuses on the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of southwestern Nova Scotia's Annapolis River and its surrounding watershed. The Annapolis River Guardians program was likely the first water quality monitoring program of its kind in Atlantic Canada. Over the past 12 years, the program has harnessed the spirit of volunteerism by training over 300 community members to become River Guardians. These volunteers collect and analyze water samples within the watershed. Their efforts provide data on the river's health, and act as an early warning system of environmental problems. The River Guardians program is also a powerful public awareness tool; it teaches the connection between environmental quality and human activity through hands-on experience.

Some issues, such as sustainability, are so complex with many facets that no single organization can have the capacity and/or the mandate to address them. Multi-stakeholder processes are highly efficient and effective ways to address sustainability issues as they bring all of the relevant actors to the table in an open, transparent and inclusive forum. By working together, the sum of the parts is greater than the whole. Each partner gives a little and gains a great deal.

Stephen Hawboldt
Executive Director
Clean Annapolis River Project



Pictou Harbour Environmental Protection Project



Located in northeastern Nova Scotia, Pictou is one of the oldest and most heavily industrialized parts of the province. The Pictou Harbour Environmental Protection Project (PHEPP) was created in 1991 to learn more about the local watershed's environmental problems and empower the community to achieve a sustainable future. PHEPP's unique Environmental Stewardship Partners Program has enabled a diverse group of partners to undertake a ground-breaking research project aimed at developing a new indicator for marine environmental health. The Immunological Biomarker Study uses innovative technology to determine how human-induced sources of pollution affect the immune systems of fish and bivalve molluscs over time. This exciting project demonstrates PHEPP's ability as a community activator, to play a leadership role in research that has national and international applications.

ACAP provides a safe haven where unique and sometimes unexpected partnerships grow into lasting community stewardship alliances.

Jack Kyte
Environmental Team Leader
Kimberly-Clark Nova Scotia





ACAP Cape Breton Inc.

Established in 1992, ACAP Cape Breton Inc. focuses its efforts on the watershed area encompassing Sydney and Glace Bay Harbours on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia. The organization undertakes projects that promote environmental education, scientific research, community-based monitoring

and habitat restoration. One of their notable achievements is the Centre for Sustainable Communities. The Centre is an information resource for the community that highlights the importance education plays in environmental management. It includes interactive displays, a resource library, and information pamphlets on various topics. One of the displays allows you to determine your ecological footprint. The Centre regularly hosts tours that stimulate thought, questions and most importantly, change. In addition, ACAP Cape Breton staff regularly speak at schools and other community venues on issues that affect our daily lives.

The possibilities are endless when a community is given the opportunity to identify its challenges and wishes, define appropriate solutions and build partnerships to make the local environment one that is healthy, sustainable and enjoyable for all. That is the strength of the ACAP program and the legacy that it is building for future generations.

**Asta Antoft
President
ACAP Cape Breton Inc.**

Sable Island Preservation Trust



Sable Island is steeped in history and is renowned for its wild horses, shipwrecks and fragile beauty. It is a 41 kilometre arc of sand in the Atlantic Ocean approximately 290 kilometres southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Sable Island Preservation Trust (SIPT) joined ACAP in 1999. Its goal is to ensure the long-term conservation of the island. The island is a haven for numerous migrants, and a small number of breeding bird species, and has status as a federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary administered by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). Through partnerships with CWS and Dalhousie University, SIPT is undertaking a long-term study on the dispersal patterns of the Ipswich Sparrow. This species is of special interest be-

cause it nests almost exclusively on Sable Island.

Because of its restricted breeding habitat, the Ipswich Sparrow is listed as a Species of Special Concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, making this work especially significant. Sable Island is also a traditional nesting habitat for the endangered Roseate Tern which is protected under Canada's Species at Risk Act. As such, SIPT will be involved in the development and implementation of recovery plans for this species.





ACAP Humber Arm Environmental Association Inc.



The ACAP Humber Arm Environmental Association Inc. (ACAP Humber Arm) was established in 1991 to address the environmental issues of the Humber Arm watershed, located on Newfoundland's west coast. ACAP Humber Arm focuses on enhancing education in coastal management and on con-

ducting research based on science and traditional ecological knowledge. Trading Books for Boats is a prime example of how ACAP Humber Arm is combining these two areas to provide a unique learning experience for local high school students. The program provides students with training on water quality monitoring, shoreline assessments, the history of the coastal zone and also hands-on fieldwork. Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Education has endorsed the curriculum, which has also received support from a range of partners. The foundation has been laid for a long-term student-based water quality monitoring program that can be applied to a range of grade levels both within the watershed and throughout the province.

ACAP is very proactive in the community; partnering with ACAP Humber Arm has provided an opportunity for Fisheries and Oceans Canada to become involved in the development and implementation of many community-led initiatives and projects related to coastal resource management – for the mutual benefit of all involved.

Joan O'Brien
Integrated Management Co-ordinator
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

St. John's Harbour ACAP Inc.



St. John's Harbour ACAP Inc. was established in 1993 to define the most appropriate treatment and conservation approaches to cleaning up St. John's Harbour, located on the east coast of Newfoundland. With approximately 120 million litres of raw sewage and storm water entering the Harbour every day, this was a challenging task. It took almost a decade, but St. John's Harbour ACAP was rewarded for its efforts on November 4, 2002, when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien came to St. John's to announce the federal government's financial commitment towards the construction of a sewage treatment plant for St. John's Harbour. This funding matched previously committed

funding from the provincial and municipal levels of government. This success is the result of many years of applied research, educational campaigns, communication with governments, and extreme dedication to the cause. St. John's Harbour ACAP will continue to play a major role through the planning and implementation stages of this project. It will also expand its efforts to address other environmental issues in the watershed and adjacent coastal areas.



Partnerships – Our Key to Success



The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) supports the 14 community organizations in the following areas: knowledge generation, capacity building, direct action, and advancement of science. This builds the local capacity and knowledge required for communities to make informed decisions and address complex issues related to the environment. ACAP projects result in a variety of partnerships formed between communities, governments, non-government organizations, academia and industry. These partnerships consistently demonstrate the value of a community-based approach and produce results on an ecosystem basis.

Science in the Community

The ACAP Science Linkages Initiative is a program that creates partnerships between the ACAP organizations and scientists from Environment Canada. Together, the partners develop proposals, conduct scientific work and report on results.

Since 1997, this has proved to be a winning partnership. Over 60 Environment Canada scientists have transferred their knowledge of scientific methods and practices to the ACAP organizations, while the organizations in turn have provided valuable knowledge about local science needs and ecosystems.

From 1997 to 2003, Environment Canada invested over \$1 million to fund 95 projects. However, the total value of the projects was much higher – about \$4.5 million. This shows the expertise and initiative the ACAP organizations have to obtain additional funds from industry, local partners and other government departments.

Another benefit of the Science Linkages Initiative is that all of the projects, either directly or indirectly, fit into Environment Canada's priorities and those of other federal and provincial departments. In this way, the ACAP organizations help deliver on a large number of Environment Canada's programs and initiatives.

ACAP, in partnership with government, continues to set the standard for engaging Canadians in identifying and addressing environmental issues of importance in their respective communities.

In this capacity, ACAP's strength is in building a collaborative approach which involves everyone in all stages from problem identification through to final solution.

**Garth Bangay
Director General
Environment Canada, Atlantic Region**



Making Waves on the International Stage

The innovative approaches and dedication of the ACAP volunteers and staff have not gone unnoticed in the global village. The ACAP organizations have shared their knowledge and experiences with counterparts in China, Indonesia, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Sri Lanka. ACAP volunteers and staff have been part of Team Canada missions, sit on international committees, and participate in projects sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency. ACAP projects and demonstration sites attract visitors from all over the world on a regular basis. This goes to show that the ACAP approach is contagious – in a good way!

A Sound Investment in Coastal Communities

An Efficient Way to Achieve Local Results

The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) provides solid results in a cost-efficient way. A recent study conducted for Environment Canada showed that having communities deliver ACAP programs costs much less than if the programs were delivered in a traditional way, with government offices and employees. For example, Environment Canada's total ACAP investment from 1997 to 2001 was about \$6 million; it would have cost the federal government 12 times that amount to directly deliver a similar program. The dedication of volunteers among the ACAP communities is a major reason for achieving this result and deserves recognition. Projects that would not have been possible in the past have been made possible through volunteerism and in-kind contributions associated with the community-based approach.

Creating Jobs and Helping Local Economies

The ACAP organizations hire full-time, part-time and seasonal employees. This creates hundreds of direct and spin-off jobs each year in communities throughout Atlantic Canada. It also provides a fertile training ground

for hundreds of youth, many of whom move on to develop careers in the environmental field.

ACAP organizations also invest in their communities. What is the economic impact of this local spending? A study has shown that from 1997 to 2001 the impact (Gross Domestic Product) was about \$22 million in direct and spin-off economic activity, which far exceeds Environment Canada's \$6 million investment in ACAP for that period. In addition, total expenditures related to the administration of ACAP

projects generated \$4.4 million in federal and \$3.6 million in provincial tax revenue. ACAP organizations are able to have such a significant impact because they are skilled at obtaining funds from local partners, industry and other government departments. That money is invested in local communities, and benefits those same communities.



Being an ACAP Window has been a very positive experience for me. It is one of the highlights of my career. The St. John's Harbour ACAP is a group with a clear purpose and direction; it has been a pleasure working with them to help them achieve their goals.

Brian Power
Provincial Manager
Environmental
Protection Branch
Newfoundland
and Labrador
Environment Canada

The Power of Windows

One of the unique aspects of ACAP is the Windows approach. What is a Window, you ask? ACAP Windows are Environment Canada employees who work directly with one ACAP organization on an on-going basis. Many Windows have served with the same community for the past 5, 7 and up to 9 years. They act as a "window" for the community into Environment Canada and vice versa. They provide a personal connection, which has established trust, credibility and respect – all keys to a successful partnership.



The Future is Bright!

Since the program began in 1991, the ACAP organizations have experienced unprecedented successes. Their accomplishments are widely recognized and they continue to gain respect and credibility on the local, national, and international stages. The theme for the future is “building on success.” This will be accomplished through Environment Canada’s continued support and partnership with the existing 14 organizations; the extension of the ACAP approach into new areas and to larger ecosystem-scale initiatives; and strengthening the bond between the ACAP organizations to increase their collective strength.

The ACAP pillars of sustainability, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and community empowerment will continue to support the environmental health of Atlantic Canadian communities for generations to come.

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 14 organizations:
www.atl.ec.gc.ca/community/

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