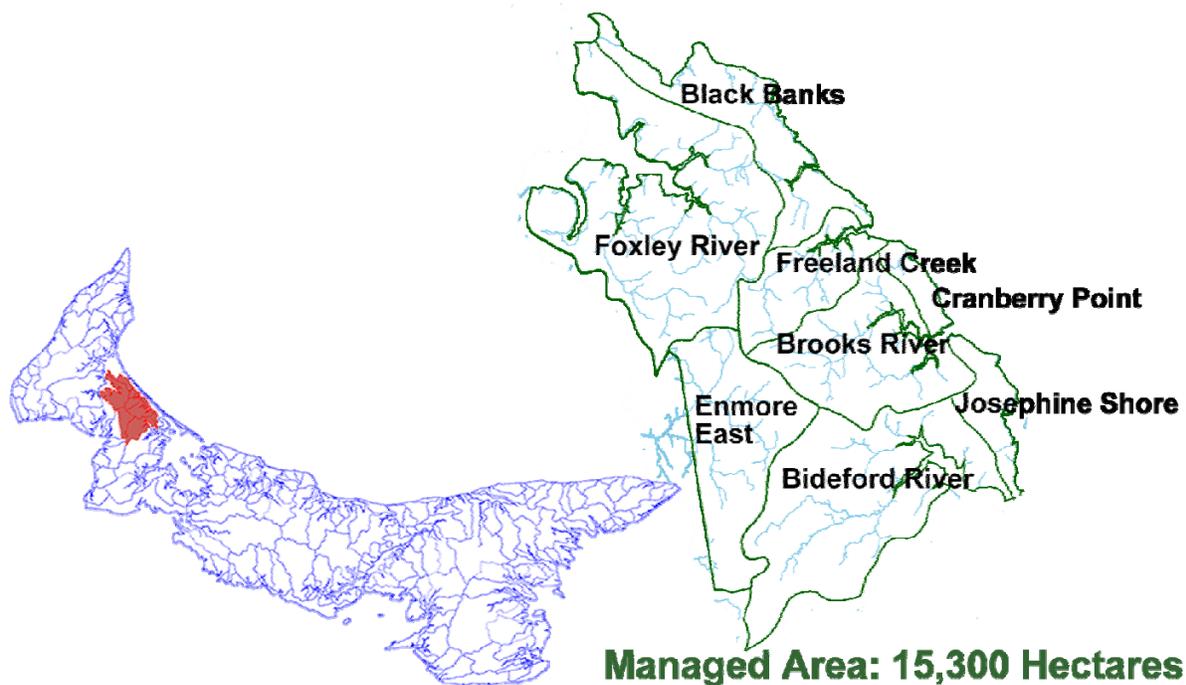


Lot 11 & Area Watershed Management Group Annual Report: May 2010 – April 2011



Prepared by:
Mark Bishop, Chairperson
The Lot 11 and Area Watershed Management Group
PO Box 115
Ellerslie, PE C0B 1J0
www.lot11andarea.org

Acknowledgements

The Lot 11 & Area Watershed Management Group acknowledges and thanks the following for their support and input.

- Our dedicated staff and volunteers
- The PEI Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry
- The Prince Edward Island Employment Development Agency
- The Prince Edward Island Greening Spaces Program
- Service Canada
- The Evangeline Credit Union
- The Prince Edward Island Wildlife Conservation Fund
- Trout Unlimited – Prince County Chapter
- The Municipality of Lot 11 and Area
- The Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance membership
- Our MLAs: Robert Henderson and Paula Biggar

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Executive Summary

The Lot 11 and Area Watershed Management Group has had an extremely productive year. We owe our success to our active community members and leaders, our generous funding partners, and the valued support and assistance of the greater PEI watershed management community.

Our work this year has stressed maximum-benefit watershed improvement through stream enhancement activities. We have also been very active and successful in community-based planning and public information. We have used a methodical, environmental science-based approach to our work. This has enabled us to maximize capacity utilization and focus our actions – and their benefits – on watershed and community priorities. We intend to continue this work, and we have set ambitious goals for the coming year.

We thank all of our acknowledged partners and our membership for making this year a success.

Background

Quick Facts

Not-for-profit community group

Formed in 2008

Eight watersheds

Ten primary streams

18 smaller streams

15,300 hectares

The Lot 11 and Area Watershed Management Group was formed in October 2008. It is a not-for-profit community group and has a six member, volunteer board of directors: Mark Bishop (Chairperson), Alfred Bridges, Judy Bryon (Treasurer), Peter Bulger (Secretary), Karen Kelly, and Donnie Strongman. It also has a 15 member planning committee.

Our group's area of management includes eight geophysical watersheds: Black Banks, Foxley River, Freeland Creek, Brooks River, Cranberry Point, Josephine Shore, Bideford River, and Enmore River (east of Route 2). It has ten independent principal streams and ~18 smaller streams. The principal streams are (as named in the Provincial GIS database): MacDonald's River, Canadian Creek, Foxley River, Gains Creek, Freeland Creek, Brooks River, Southwest Creek, Grants Brook, Ellerslie Brook, and the Enmore River. We manage a total area of 15,300 hectares (10th largest watershed group on PEI).

Our group initially obtained funding through the Provincial Watershed Management Fund (WMF), the Evangeline Credit Union, and Service Canada in 2009. We hired a capable, motivated Watershed Coordinator, Karen Rank. We also hired a field technician through the Service Canada Summer Jobs Program. Our mandate for this first year was to begin community-based watershed planning and to perform assessments for each of the geophysical watersheds in our area. Training and group infrastructure development was also a focus. The information gathered during this formative year was of critical value in our subsequent watershed enhancement and

protection efforts. This work enabled exemplary watershed restoration performance focused on mitigation of priority problems in 2010.

In 2010 we obtained our second year's funding through WMF, the PEI Employment Development Agency (EDA), Service Canada, the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund (WCF), and the Provincial Greening Spaces Program. We were fortunate to employ four workers through the EDA Jobs for Youth Program, the EDA Special Projects Program, and the Service Canada Summer Jobs Program. Our efforts focused on stream improvement/protection, community planning, public information, ongoing training, and group capacity and infrastructure development. Our accomplishments this year and our plans for the coming year are summarized in the following sections.

Stream Work

Our group performed stream enhancements at Foxley River, Freeland Creek, Brooks River, and Grants Brook. Please refer to our 2010 stream assessments for background on these streams and the need for the work performed.

Foxley River

Foxley River Quick Facts

200 trees planted
75 brushmats installed
53 blockages removed
Trash removal
Sediment trap installed
In-stream cover placement
Beaver management

The Foxley River is endangered by sediment inputs from surrounding land uses. These sediment problems degrade habitat for indigenous aquatic life. Furthermore, they endanger a productive impoundment near the head of tide (Milligan's Pond).

Preliminary to in-stream corrective actions, the riparian zone was reinforced by planting trees. Brushmats were installed on the point bars of each meander turn to stabilize banks, trap migrating sediment bed-load, and capture fugitive sediment releases. At several points in the channel, blockages that impeded migration of anadromous fish were either removed or repositioned. Trash in the stream channel and along the banks was removed. Beavers were managed in accordance with our approved beaver management plan.

After installing stabilization structures, we installed an in-stream sediment trap at an optimum location in the stream. This project was a substantial effort and involved many volunteer services and donated materials. We received help from Trout Unlimited – Prince County Chapter during preliminary planning, and they provided fish rescue services prior to the trap excavation. Our excavation costs were provided primarily through WCF. After installation, to protect trout from cormorant predation, an in-stream cover placement was installed.



Freeland Creek

Freeland Creek Quick Facts

Trees/grasses planted
10 brushmats installed
42 blockages removed

Our work at Freeland Creek focused on priority stabilization measures. This stream had sediment inputs from bare ground near the head of tide. At the recommendation of Herb Isherwood of the PEI Department of Forestry, trees and grasses were used to stabilize these areas. The stream also had several migratory barriers. Prior to removing these blockages, we installed brushmats at point bars downstream from the work.

Grant's Brook

Grant' Brook Quick Facts

Alder patch cuts
Trash removal
47 blockages removed

This stream is in remarkable condition and work was limited to blockage management. A total of 47 blockages were either removed or repositioned. Trash was also removed from the channel and riparian zone. A few alder patch-cuts were also performed.

Brooks River

Brooks River Quick Facts

280 trees/shrubs planted
68 blockage removals
63 brushmats installed
Trash removal (2 truck loads)
Selective alder patch cuts
2-tier ladder pool constructed
Preliminary beaver management

This stream is threatened by sediment inputs from surrounding land uses. In many areas the channel is choked by alder impaction. Ruins from a dam/bridge at the head of tide created a cascade that impaired fish access.

Again, preliminary to in-stream corrective actions, the riparian zone was reinforced by planting trees, and brushmats were installed at the point bars of each meander turn to stabilize banks, trap migrating sediment bed-load, and capture fugitive sediment releases. Blockages that impeded migration of anadromous fish were either removed or repositioned. Trash in the stream channel and along the banks was removed – two truckloads! In certain sections alders were patch cut and replanted with trees, shrubs, and grasses.

The migratory obstacle created by the ruins at the head of tide was corrected with a two-pool, boulder and rock ladder. The ruins consisted of wooden beams and, fortunately, many large boulders. The ladder was constructed entirely with rock and boulders available on site. Trout Unlimited – Prince County Chapter helped enormously with this project.



Watershed Planning

Plan Development

We formed a planning committee and developed a draft watershed management plan in 2009. In 2010 we refined this plan through meetings of our committee and through direct stakeholder contact... at the kitchen table. We presented the plan to our municipal community council at its April 4th meeting and to the wider community at a pre-advertised general meeting on April 12th. It was unanimously approved at the April 12, 2011 meeting. A notice of the plan's approval was published in the West Prince Graphic on April 20, 2011.

But planning is not over. In fact, it has just begun. Implementing the plan will be our new focus. We will be monitoring our progress and re-crafting our plan as experiences, priorities, and future challenges dictate.

Public Information

Newsletters

Our group issued two newsletters in 2010. The first was a cooperative effort with the Lot 11 and Area Community Council. It presented important facts about our watershed assets, a summary of our previous work, our plans for 2010, and a credit to our funding partners. Our second newsletter focused on the importance of proper septic tank maintenance.

The Community Recreation Program

Our group's office is located at Warburton Park in Foxley River. Our community also sponsors a summer recreation program at the park. Parents and children throughout the community came to the park, giving us a remarkable opportunity to interest and inform our public.

Ellerslie Home and School Association

The Ellerslie Home and School Association is planning a playground and school grounds revitalization. Our group is involved with this project, focusing on environmental improvement. We worked with DEEF Senior Forestry Technician, Herb Isherwood, Ellerslie Home and School President, June Ellis, and Ellerslie School Principal, Jason Cormier, to design a tree and shrub planting program for the project. We worked with Herb in completing an application for the provincial Greening Spaces Program, and we have committed to providing volunteer assistance when planting begins. Part of the planting will create a mixed demonstration forest, with various trees and shrubs for tree identification and forest-awareness teaching exercises.

Web

Our group and the Municipality of Lot 11 and Area have a cooperative website. Please visit us at www.lot11andarea.org.

Newspaper

We had two articles in the *West Prince Graphic*. Both were related to our stream improvement efforts at Foxley River. A notice of the watershed plan's approval was published in the *West Prince Graphic* on April 20, 2011.

Ongoing and Follow-up Assessments

The Ellerslie Brook and the related Hayes Brook are the site of the earliest documented stream improvement project on PEI (Saunders, *et al.*, *American Fisheries Journal*, 1962). We surveyed this stream system in the summer of 2010. Although it is fairly healthy and a credit to the wisdom of environmental management, we identified certain areas that need our future attention.

Part of the ongoing management work at our other streams (initially surveyed in 2009) is ongoing monitoring and assessment. All of our streams were evaluated throughout the season. A final, formal survey was performed at each stream in the fall.

Beaver management is an important part of our watershed management task. Throughout the year we worked with trappers to implement our beaver management plans. The Lot 11 and Area Watershed Management Group does not pursue beaver eradication in our area. Beavers play a fundamental role in establishing productive wildlife habitat – and all of its benefits – in our area. Instead, we focus on enhancing fish migration routes in the primary channels our streams.

Ongoing Training

A qualified, informed staff is our primary asset. Our Coordinator, Karen Rank, who has previously been trained in the science of riparian health management, watershed management safety and health, and chain saw certification, attended a stream improvement course presented by Trout Unlimited – Prince County Chapter and also attended the Atlantic Agricultural Riparian Health Workshop.

Our group is a member of the Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance (www.peiwatershedalliance.org). Our Coordinator and our Chairperson actively participated in Alliance projects and conferences in 2010. This organization provides a great opportunity for groups to share and enrich their collective experience in successful watershed management on PEI. We encourage our provincial leaders to engage and support the Alliance.

We also gained substantial watershed management knowledge from neighboring groups in our western region. DEEF Coordinator Ross Bernard's regional meetings are an opportunity to share experience with other group coordinators and to benefit from Ross's knowledge.

Infrastructure Development

We continued to improve our group's ability to meet its objectives through the prudent, conservative purchase of materials and equipment. For the most part this consisted of safety gear, apparel, and tools for active stream improvement projects. We also purchased some ancillary office supplies and refurbished two donated computers. These computers will be loaded with environmental presentations and will be used by children and young adults who participate in our community's summer recreation program. Planning expenses consisted primarily of document costs and hall/office rental.

Providing Meaningful Employment

We were fortunate to have five motivated seasonal employees this year. The work they did was of substantial benefit to our riverine and riparian assets. Rightfully, their contribution is a source of pride and accomplishment. We do not consider our employer-related expenses to be financial overhead, but rather an investment in our future. We give special thanks to our funding partners for making this possible.



More than 1100 volunteer hours have been devoted to stream work, planning, public information, assessments, financial management, employer obligations (record keeping, payroll management, reporting), writing/editing (watershed plan, permits, work plans, beaver management plans, fish habitat management plans, reports to funding partners, funding applications, etc.).

Future Work: 2011

Stream Work

We have ambitious goals for 2011. These include ongoing bank stabilization, migration corridor improvement, sediment management, riparian zone enrichment, maintenance of previous improvements, beaver management, ongoing assessment, alder management, and trash removal. Because Foxley River, Freeland Creek, and Brooks River are threatened, considerable work will be performed at these streams, but we also plan general improvement projects at Ellerslie Brook and Grants Brook. Additionally, some corridor improvement is needed in the primary channel (first ~800 meters) of the MacDonald's River, but we will not be interfering with the exemplary, productive wetland habitat created by beavers in the upper reaches.

Large-scale projects will include a major bank stabilization at Freeland Creek, a sediment trap at Foxley River, and a damaged culvert replacement at Foxley River.

Community-based Planning

Our watershed management plan is a plan of *action*, not a document to tuck away on a shelf. It is an expression of our community concerns, developed by community members. Our community has mandated that our group play a key role in realizing the plan's objectives. Public information/awareness and individual responsibility are primary strategies in achieving our goals.

We will continue to inform our community members, work with land owners, interface with other community/industry groups, evaluate our watersheds, plan and prioritize improvement/preservation work, mediate conflicts, involve the public, and provide a learning experience for children. Refining our plan – keeping it relevant, realistic, and focused for maximum benefit – is an ongoing effort.

Assessment

We have been a very successful group. We owe this success to our methodical, first-hand, knowledge-based approach to our work. We prepared ourselves to be competent riverine/riparian professionals, then we used our expertise to identify, evaluate, and prioritize our watershed assets and problems. Because of this, we were

able to maximize the benefits of our actions – avoiding many mistakes and misspent efforts. In short, we accomplished more in our first two years than most new groups do. To continue our success we must continue to take our scientific approach. Measurement and observation – in the field – will be an integral component of our work in 2011.

Maintaining and Building Group Capacity

To be effective in our efforts we must continue to be a provider of meaningful employment. We hope to have a staff that is as accomplished and capable as our team in 2010. Our community is increasingly aware of, and interested in, our group and its work. As we continue our work we are confident of expanded volunteer participation.

Remaining effective will require continued training and participation in the greater watershed community. As our group matures, we hope to bring the benefit of our group's muscle, knowledge, and experience to others in the same generous way that we have been helped by our neighboring watershed managers.

