

# Lot 11 & Area Watershed Management Group, Inc. Annual Report: FY 2012/2013



## Acknowledgements

The Lot 11 & Area Watershed Management Group acknowledges and thanks all of our staff, volunteers, funding partners (including WMF, WCF, EDA, Greening Spaces, Service Canada), the Department of Forestry, the Department of Transportation, our neighboring groups, the PEI Watershed Alliance, the Lot 11 & Area CC, and our MLAs for making our year a success and our future possible.

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## Executive Summary

This annual report presents our year's accomplishments and explicitly demonstrates the consistency between our actions and the strategies mandated by our community-ratified watershed management plan. In the section that presents our past year's accomplishments, we list the specific strategies implemented by each task immediately following the task's subsection heading.

Key projects for the year included:

- Major Projects
  - Development of the MacDonald's River Watershed Interpretive Trail. Our interpretive trail at MacDonald's River is very well received by our community. This project shares with our community members and visitors the value of a remarkably pristine old-growth forest, a healthy gravel-bottom stream, and a productive, anoxia-free estuary. We plan to further improve the accessibility of the trail and provide interpretive materials for education
  - Sediment control and removal in the Foxley River Watershed
  - Presentation of watershed seminars at schools and community youth group gatherings.
- Although major projects are the most visible efforts, a substantial portion of our year's work was general stream improvement efforts at key geophysical watersheds managed by our group.
- Community engagement, building alliances, providing community information, and exchanging ideas is a year-round focus for our group. Although difficult to enumerate and quantify, this work is singularly our most important effort as we seek the realization of our community mandate for watershed protection and improvement.

Also presented is a short outline of our ambitious plans for the coming year... and some worrisome challenges we face. We are particularly concerned with the possible loss of our experienced staff members arising from provincial re-envisioning of employment insurance programs for EDA SPP workers. We must also plan for board member succession and better encourage watershed volunteerism.

## Background

The Lot 11 and Area Watershed Management Group, Inc was formed in October 2008 and incorporated in 2011. It is a not-for-profit community group and has a seven member, volunteer board of directors: Mark Bishop (Chairperson), Peter Bulger (Secretary), Susan Milligan (Treasurer), Karen Kelly, Alfred Bridges, Marian Besserer, and Alicia Curran. We also have a 15<sup>+</sup> member planning committee.

Our major funding partners include the provincial Watershed Management Fund (WMF), the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund (WCF), the provincial Employment Development Agency (EDA), the provincial Greening Spaces Program, and Service Canada.

## Quick Facts

Nine watersheds

Ten primary streams

18 smaller streams

15,602 hectares

80% Forested (1990)

Three municipalities

Our group's area of management includes nine geophysical watersheds: Black Banks, Foxley River, Freeland Creek, Brook's River, Cranberry Point, Josephine Shore, Bideford River, Conway Sand Hills, and Enmore River East. It has ten independent principal streams and ~18 smaller streams. The principal streams are: MacDonald's River, Canadian Creek, Foxley River, Gains Creek, Freeland Creek, Brook's River, Southwest Creek, Grant's Brook, Ellerslie Brook, and the Enmore River. The Conway Sand Hills watershed is entirely natural sand dune wetland.

## Staff

We were fortunate to have eleven motivated employees this year. Our field staff included two experienced watershed field technicians provided through the EDA SPP program. Both have multi-year experience with our group and are trained in safety, chainsaw operation, and watershed management.

We also had eight youth workers: two through EDA JFY, one through the Service Canada Summer Jobs Program, two shared through the Department of Environment's student job initiative, and three shared through the Department of Transportation and Public Works. All of these students made a substantial contribution to our group's work and all had a meaningful summer job experience.

Our Group Coordinator, Karen Rank, has served as our Watershed Coordinator since 2008 and has led our efforts to realize our mission. She has post-secondary training in Integrated Watershed Management (UPEI) and is safety and chain-saw certified. Her abilities in overall watershed management are exemplary on PEI. Her work includes:

- Achieving/accessing consensus-based community objectives for our watersheds as detailed in our community-ratified watershed management plan
- Providing information to community members resulting in property-use strategies that are critical to maintaining the high standard of our drinking water quality, our wildlife habitat, and our shell fishing resources
- Providing resources to support landowners in their efforts to use, enjoy, and derive their living from their property in a watershed-friendly way
- Building our group's capacity to serve the community and environment
- Training and mentoring our staff
- Designing, managing, and executing stream improvement projects

- Productively interfacing with community members, government servants, municipal leaders, the greater watershed management community, local economic sectors, community groups, and members of our Legislative Assembly
- Supervising the gainful, meaningful employment of our staff
- Educating and engaging the young people who will inherit our watersheds
- Developing curricula and conducting classroom exercises relevant to watershed management in our schools and community youth groups
- Group Administration including: funding applications, reports, permit applications, wage and hour oversight, etc.



Karen Rank, outstanding in the field

## Watershed Plan Implementation

The Lot 11 & Area Watershed Management Plan\* provides the framework for our group's actions. All of our actions this year focused on using the plan's key strategies to realize our objectives. These strategies will be referred to throughout this report.

### Key Strategies

Our planning committee identified 14 primary strategies for realizing our goals. All of our work this year focused on implementing these strategies. (Implementation of strategy 1 is implicit in all of our actions.)

#### Primary Plan Strategies

1. Maintain a practical-action role for the group
2. Provide Public Information – Groundwater/Drinking Water Assets
3. Provide Public Information – Forest, Wetland and Wildlife Assets

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4. Promote Public Awareness and a Sense of Resource Ownership
5. Establish Monitoring – Drinking Water
6. Continue/Expand Resource Assessment – Forest, Wetland, and Wildlife Assets.
7. Promote Resource Conservation
8. Maintain and Stay Current with Resource Conservation and Habitat Enhancement Methods
9. Conduct Resource Enhancement Projects
10. Involve Community in Decision Making
11. Preserve Unique Cultural and Environmentally Significant Resources
12. Form Productive Alliances
13. Promote Youth Education and Involvement
14. Maintain and Expand Financial Resources

## Accomplishments: 2012/2013

### Major Projects

#### Foxley River Sediment Control and Capture

Implements strategies 1, 4, 7, 9, and 11

Foxley River is a priority stream in our management area. The health of the estuary and the livelihoods of those who depend upon it are critically tied to the quality of this stream. A major project to eliminate sediment input and remove existing sediment bed load was completed this year at the East Foxley River. Components of this project included:

- Stabilization of a clay road that discharged sediment to the river
- Construction of an in-stream sediment trap to remove fugitive silt

We are especially grateful to Gillis Limited for their expert excavation and construction work, and to the WCF and WMF for their contributions.



Clay road sediment source



Road stabilization with gravel



Stream before trap



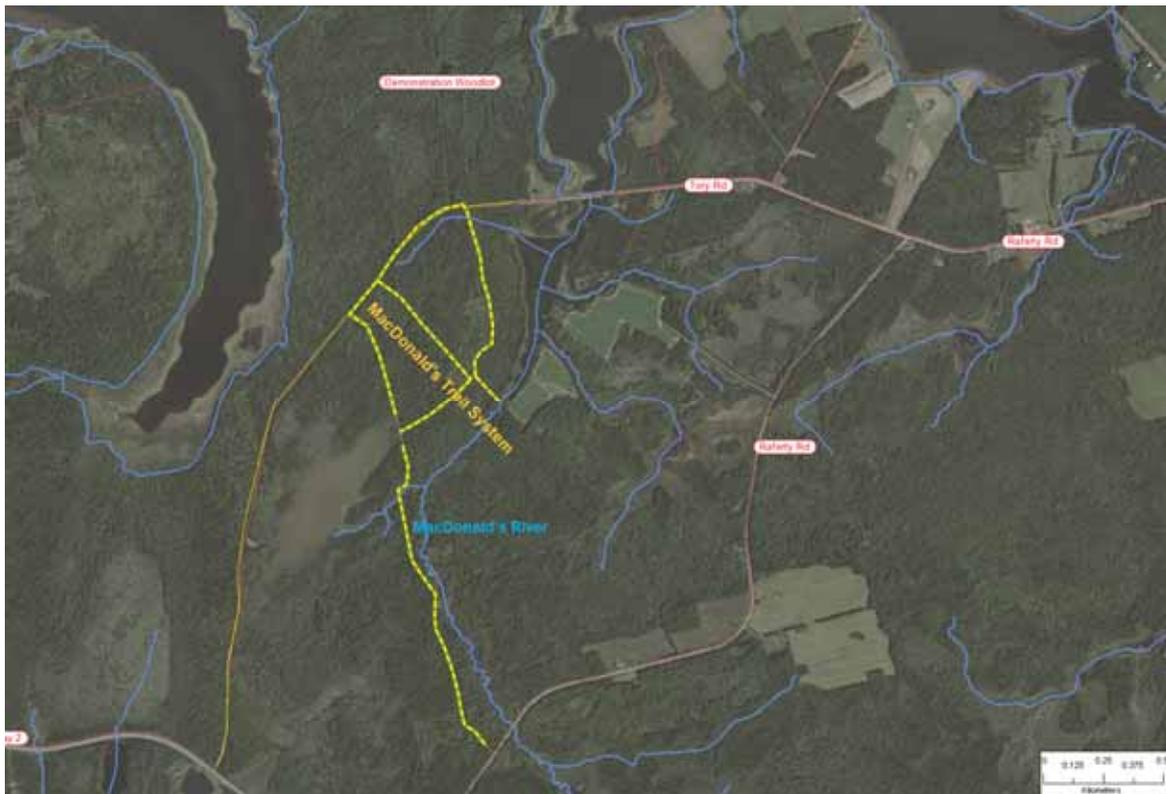
Stream after trap

## MacDonald's River Interpretive Trail

Implements strategies 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13

The MacDonald's River sub-watershed constitutes one of our island's most healthy and pristine environmental assets. It supports a productive, anoxia-free estuary that, in turn, supports a substantial local shell fishing industry (Note: this estuary is one of the few on PEI that does not have a DFO shell fishing prohibition order in its upper reach.) It features one of the few undisturbed old growth forests on PEI and a gravel bottom stream that is essentially not impacted by human activity. It is also home to the Foxley River Demonstration Woodlot. It is centered in a 5000 hectare subsection of Foxley River watershed that is ~95% forest/wetland.

Making this resource accessible to our community members and our visitors for recreational hiking and educational enrichment has been one of our group's most significant undertakings this year. We must continue to improve the accessibility of the trail and provide interpretive materials for education. The map below shows the MacDonald's Trail system. In its entirety, the trail is over 5 Km in length and abuts an additional ~3 Km trail at the Foxley River Demonstration Woodlot.



The cover photograph presents an example of one of the trail segments being created/improved. We give special thanks to the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Department of Forestry for their cooperation on this project.

## Educating Our Youth

Implements strategies 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13

Our Watershed Coordinator developed and presented seminars at West Isle School (Grade 11) and 4H. This work exactly fulfills an explicit mandate from our planning committee:

Strategy 13 : Promote Youth Education and Involvement:

- Working with educators to bring watershed issues to their rightful forefront in local thinking is perhaps the most proactive approach for our future. Public information must have an education component. Our young people will inherit our land and our problems. We have a responsibility to prepare them for their future challenges.

We also worked closely with the Municipality of Lot 11 and Area in the Warburton Park summer recreation program. Watershed-relevant activities, like the *Invasive Species Easter Egg Hunt*, brought watershed awareness and values to pre-school children.



Seminar at West Isle School

## Ongoing Stream/Watershed Improvement/Protection Work

Implements strategies 1, 7, 9, 11

### Tree/shrub planting

A total of 800 trees and shrubs were planted in riparian zones within our managed area.

- Foxley River East: 600
- Foxley River West: 120
- Grant's Brook: 80

Trees/shrub species included:

| Species           | Number | Species         | Number |
|-------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| White Birch       | 50     | Black Spruce    | 48     |
| Large Tooth Aspen | 20     | White Pine      | 48     |
| Red Oak           | 50     | Red Pine        | 48     |
| White Ash         | 50     | Red Leaf Willow | 13     |
| Red Maple         | 50     | Pussy Willow    | 4      |
| Yellow Birch      | 50     | Sumac           | 31     |
| Green Ash         | 50     | Spiraea         | 48     |
| Balsam Fir        | 48     | Common Elder    | 48     |
| Eastern Larch     | 48     | Bayberry        | 48     |
| Aronia P          | 48     |                 |        |

### **Bank Stabilization**

Several stream banks were stabilized at meander point bars with brushmats. Additionally, brushmats installed in previous years were maintained as required.

### **Migratory Channel Improvements**

One important task in our stream work is protecting migratory access to anadromous and catadromous fish throughout our streams' primary channels. Approximately 150 migratory obstacles were corrected with low-impact, debris-conservative methods. Where obstacles were beaver related and within established beaver-free zones, they were removed in accordance with our approved beaver management plans.

### **Alder Succession**

Where appropriate, alders were patch harvested and replanted with appropriate succession trees/shrubs/grasses.

## **Public Information/Communications**

Implements strategies 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, and 14

### **Newsletters**

A newsletter was distributed in early 2013. This was a cooperative effort with the Lot 11 and Area Community Council. You may download it from <http://www.lot11andarea.org/wsPublications.php>

### **Web**

Our group and the Municipality of Lot 11 and Area have a cooperative website at <http://www.lot11andarea.org>. This site had 48,176 visitors in the period between April 2012 and March 2013. It is rated by international peer review through the Web Of Trust as excellent for trustworthiness, privacy, and child safety. It is entirely W3C compliant and is designed, maintained, and hosted for less than \$80/yr.

### **Facebook**

We share a cooperative Facebook page with the Municipality.

## Newspaper

We had an article published in the *West Prince Graphic* that highlighted our stream improvement project at Foxley River. This was a regional, group-cooperative press release and was a paid-for WCF contact deliverable.

## Direct exchange with community members

Our relationship with other community organizations (municipal community council, recreation programs, municipal emergency measures, trade associations, the Milligan's Wharf Harbor Authority, etc) presents a productive mechanism for communicating watershed values and promoting awareness to captive audiences.

Kitchen table meetings and volunteer participation in assessments, planting projects, and work review are frequent activities for our group.

## Public Meetings

Our Annual General Meeting in 2012 was a huge success. The turn-out was stellar and a lively question and answer session followed informative presentations from our Treasurer, our Coordinator, and our Chairperson. At closing, the Hon. Robert Henderson, Minister of Tourism and Culture and District 25 MLA, congratulated our group and promised ongoing support.



## Ongoing and Follow-up Assessments

Implements strategy 6

Follow-up assessments were conducted at Ellerslie Brook, Grant's Brook, Paugh's Creek, Brook's River, Freeland Creek, Gain's Creek, MacDonald's River, and Foxley River. Our channels are clear, our water runs clear during storms, and, our Chairman adds; "the fishing is

pretty good lately!" We have problem areas that need tree planting, enhancement maintenance, and new restoration/protection work.

## Ongoing Training

Implements strategy 8

A qualified, informed staff is our primary asset. Staff members attended safety, watershed management, and chain saw courses coordinated by the PEI Watershed Alliance.

## Expanding Partnerships

### Participating as members in related community groups

Implements strategies 2, 3, 4, and 5

Our staff and membership have membership roles with several other community groups having common missions. These include municipal community council, recreation programs, municipal emergency measures, trade/industry associations, the Milligan's Wharf Harbor Authority, 4H, etc. These relationships broaden responsible watershed management ideas and actions and result in watershed-integrated decision making.

### Developing/maintaining partnerships

Applies to all strategies.

Our group is a not-for-profit community organization. Our actions and accomplishments are underpinned by contributions from supporting partners who provide grants and services. Maintaining these partnerships is central to realizing our goals. In fact, our group's potential is limited, nearly exclusively, by the extent of this support. Administrative effort associated with contract management is considerable (applications, reports, press releases, multiple accounting schedules, receipt categorization, records management, etc). In addition to administrative tasks, we devote time to funding research and solicitation. All of this work brings outside resources to our community and our province. Watershed groups translate provincial, federal, and private funding resources into local benefits.

### Participation in Regional and Island-wide Management

Implements strategies 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 and 14

We gained from, and contributed to, the watershed management knowledge base of groups in our western region, both in the field and at regional/provincial meetings.

We assisted other groups in conducting short-term, labour intensive projects as well as administrative tasks. One such project was the West Point Marram Grass planting. Administrative tasks included assisting other groups with bylaw development, funding applications, reports, press-releases, etc.

Our Coordinator, Karen Rank, is a member of the [PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund Committee](#). Her role on this committee is to participate in the fund's oversight as a representative of Island watershed groups.

Our group is a member of the Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance ([www.peiwatershedalliance.org](http://www.peiwatershedalliance.org)). Our Coordinator and our Chairperson actively participated in Alliance projects and conferences in 2012. This organization provides a great opportunity for groups to share and enrich their collective experience in successful watershed management on PEI.

## Providing Meaningful Employment

Implements strategies 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14

We were fortunate to have eleven motivated 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 were supported in providing this employment through the Provincial Watershed Management Fund, the Employment Development Agency, and Service Canada. We also benefited from in-kind labour assistance from provincially paid summer students provided by TPW and the Department of Environment.

To the remarkable credit of our community and province, watershed groups are substantial employers in Lot 11 and Area and island wide. We employ people to serve the community and protect/improve our shared watershed assets. Labour supervision, payroll management, records management, insurance maintenance, reporting requirements, task assignment, and safety awareness are all part the important task of being a responsible employer.

## Future Work: 2013/2014

In the coming year we will continue to pursue the goals of our Watershed Management Plan through active implementation of the strategies identified in it.

Our interpretive trail at MacDonald's River is very well received by our community. This project shares with our community members and visitors the value of a remarkably pristine old-growth forest, a healthy gravel-bottom stream, and a productive, anoxia-free estuary. We must continue to improve the accessibility of the trail and provide interpretive materials for education. The recreational, social, educational, and watershed-beneficial value of this project is substantial and remarkable. Our funding partners and community leaders agree.

We also hope to retire a sediment trap on the East Foxley River. Inputs have been stabilized by our work over the past few years and one final maintenance excavation will result in a completed restoration in the local stream reach. Retiring an in-stream sediment trap is an important – and uncommonly achieved – standard of effectiveness for stream restoration projects conducted on PEI.

At the site of the sediment trap there is a hung culvert. We plan to remedy the migratory barrier by creating a down-stream rock pool.

We will continue restoration maintenance, ongoing enhancements, tree planting, etc. at the ten streams in our managed area.

We have a cooperative agreement with the Municipal Community Council to provide education resources to the community recreation program. As usual, we will be active in many other planning and community activities. Public information and community engagement and involvement will also continue to be a principal action item for us. Our future will be determined by the responsible decisions of informed community members.

## Challenges

### Labour

Our staff are the most important asset of our group. They provide the pragmatically-oriented muscle and brain power necessary for being a successful, results-oriented group.

They are the people necessary for the task-level implementation of our community watershed plan. They are experienced, committed, conscientious, and they have specialized skills.

Most often their tasks are seasonal, but they must have a sustaining income year-round. As Employment Insurance qualifications for seasonal workers evolve, increasingly staff members are led towards other employment. Our valued employees may abandon their roles in watershed management, seeking work elsewhere – perhaps far away from home.

Watershed management work, and community improvement work in general, have no rival for social and environmental benefit. Every provincial dollar provided for watershed management labour is force-magnified by the organizations they serve. Our provincial government assures us that the watershed management responsibilities we have risen to assume are a provincial priority. Resources must accompany responsibilities. To be accountable, we must be enabled.

*We ask our MLAs to keep your community watershed group adequately staffed by urging legislature to provide sustainable provincial support through the Employment Development Agency's Special Projects Program and Jobs for Youth Program. One very beneficial and feasible option is to extend the EDA SPP contract season to 16 weeks. Another solution is to provide the additional wage support through WMF.*

## Drinking Water Quality Monitoring

Our watershed management plan identifies drinking water quality monitoring as a strategy for realizing plan objectives. Provincial testing services are available, but they charge fees that make community-wide monitoring objectives unachievable by our group. Public safety is a government responsibility. Drinking water quality is a matter of public safety.

*We ask our MLAs to urge the provincial laboratory to provide each resident with one free test for bacteria and chemistry each year. Our group offers to conduct sample submission events in our community.*

## Volunteer Participation

Everyone is busy. It is easy to say, "someone should do something." When community groups do take practical action, it is easy to say, "I'm glad someone is doing something." But it is hard to get involved personally. Consequently, a few community members carry a long-term burden. This in turn further discourages potential community volunteers. We worry, "If I get involved, I'll be stuck there forever just like so-and-so."

Our group's by-laws limit board member terms to three years with an option for no more than two consecutive terms. This guarantees that you will not get *stuck forever* serving on the board. Mandatory succession provides group vigor. New problems evolve and fresh viewpoints are required. Informed participation is the necessary ingredient for community ownership.

Community-based watershed management may not have a future on PEI without your involvement. If community-based watershed management groups fail, then either the provincial government will manage our watershed assets for us, or they will not be managed at all.

*We invite you to join our planning committee and consider nomination to our board of directors.*

Individual contributors participating in field activities is also very important. This may include help with stream assessments, trail improvement, tree planting, communications

assistance, work review, etc. Those who volunteer not only provide a valued service; they enjoy the experience and reinforce the productive spirit of our staff.

*Take a walk with us and see our community's remarkable watersheds. Find out how much fun (and invigorating exercise) it is. Find out how you can contribute.*



Supporter Logos

