

September 18, 2009

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Division
136 Exhibition Street
Kentville, Nova Scotia
B4N 4E5

Re: Final Report - Ecology Action Centre Coastlines Natural History
Column (2008/2009)

Please find attached the final report for the Ecology Action Centre's Coastlines Natural History Column. This package contains (1) a written report; (2) an invoice for the remaining funds due from this project; and (3) a financial statement outlining project spending.

The Coastlines Natural History column has been very well received by newspapers around the province and the general public. The series reaches a wide and diverse readership and fills a useful gap in conservation efforts and stewardship in the region. The focus on coastal systems, including their connection to freshwater features, also makes the series unique and memorable.

The Ecology Action Centre has appreciated the Habitat Conservation Funds' support for this valuable initiative.

Thank you,

Sadie Beaton
Coastlines Coordinator

A. Project Goal and Objectives

The Coastlines Natural History Column aimed to inspire the general public, private landowners, and resource users to nurture their appreciation and understanding of coastal habitat conservation issues, coastal ecology, and biodiversity in order to encourage their participation in protecting, conserving, and managing wildlife habitat.

- Develop and deliver 12 thematically linked Coastlines columns about freshwater systems, biodiversity, and wildlife, including helpful tips for resource and habitat stewardship.
- Foster a stewardship ethic among private landowners, resource users, and the general public by distributing Coastlines monthly via 15 community newspapers, along with the internet.
- Engage six provincial experts on Nova Scotia's freshwater features to share their knowledge with a general audience by writing a Coastlines Column.

B. Outline of the work completed

Preparatory work (June – August 2008)

- Contacted community newspapers in Nova Scotia to solicit feedback on the previous year's submissions and introduce the theme for the next
- Contacted new newspapers and online publication sources to expand and diversify provincial readership.
- Develop a detailed plan of themes, topics, authors and timeline for Coastlines series for entire year (attached)
- Updated authors guidelines with writer's tips and some notes on the freshwater theme (attached)
- Contacted potential authors and helped develop focus for their articles.

Ongoing Coordination and Administration (September 2008 – September 2009)

- EAC Coastlines Coordinator Sadie Beaton wrote six Coastlines articles.

- Coordinated preparation of the other six Coastlines columns including working with authors to revise text, locate appropriate images, and send final drafts.
- Coordinated the distribution of Coastlines to 22 media sources in Nova Scotia, including several online locations, collecting them at the EAC website www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines .

C. Results

- 22 media outlets around Nova Scotia received and regularly ran Coastlines columns (list of newspapers and websites attached)
- 12 Coastlines columns were produced (list of topics, author and dates they appeared is attached).
- 4 Coastlines articles were translated into French (available at www.ecologyaction.ca/coastlines)
- Reader feedback as indicated by emails from readers around the province has been favourable, especially on columns highlighting a particular freshwater species.

D. Achievements and lessons learned measured against the project goals

Feedback from the (2007-2008) beach themed columns had suggested that while the thematic format was appreciated, it would be most useful to highlight ecosystems common all around the province. (The focus on beaches meant that some papers, particularly in the Bay of Fundy region, did not always find the series directly relevant to their readership.) This is one of the main reasons that this year's (2008-2009) Coastlines articles focused on connecting Nova Scotia's freshwater ecosystems to our extensive coastline.

Following a similar model from the past year's beaches theme, the Coastlines Coordinator worked with coastal and water experts to develop a thematic set of columns which outlined ecosystem features, celebrated key wildlife, and explored connections with our human systems, finishing off with a holistic reflection on our relationship with this vital resource. Seasonality was also incorporated – for example Val Kendall's "Nova Scotia's Lakes: Life Under the Ice", published in January, allowed readers to connect more directly to freshwater phenomenon in their own backyards.

Overall, Coastlines was successful in meeting its deliverables and in achieving positive impacts in increasing knowledge of coastal conservation and habitat stewardship. By engaging with more diverse publications, including web locations, we were able to reach a more widespread and inclusive readership. For example, we received positive feedback about Coastlines Column from readers of both Netawek Ikjikum and Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

E. What's next?

Without continued funding for the coordination of the columns, Ecology Action Centre unfortunately cannot continue to build on the momentum created over the past two years. Several editors expressed disappointment that the series had to be discontinued.

EAC hopes to secure a new source of funding in future years to continue to inspire understanding and stewardship of Nova Scotia's invaluable coastal habitats and features.