



# Flyway

## Identifying wetlands of importance in Amiante

Many of you have stood on the shores of the St. Lawrence and witnessed the magnificent sight of a wedge of migrating ducks or a flight of snow geese. It is well known that the river is a critical staging area for the spring and fall migrations of numerous species of the Atlantic Flyway. For most of us, the importance of protecting the wetlands where thousands of ducks are concentrated, such as those of the St. Lawrence and Outaouais river corridors, is clear.

The issue is less obvious when it comes to the inland wetlands, which are important nesting grounds for most ducks. Not only are these environments more diverse (marshes, peat swamps, wet meadows, beaver ponds), but they are also scattered over a vast territory. It is therefore essential to develop a structured approach facilitating identification of the most important lands in terms of their role and their value to society. The exercise must provide the clearest possible picture of all of the wetlands in a given territory, as small sites are often just as important as large ones in many respects, particularly for species of amphibians that need networks of tiny wetlands to survive.

The Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) team has accordingly developed a three-pronged approach consisting of 1) gathering information on wetlands, 2) identifying priority wetlands for conservation, and 3) partnering with various stakeholders to conserve those wetlands. An initial effort aimed at identifying, characterizing and evaluating the wetlands of the Municipality of Boisbriand was carried out in 2003. You may have read about it, as the project was the subject of an article last year (*Atlantic Flyway*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2003).

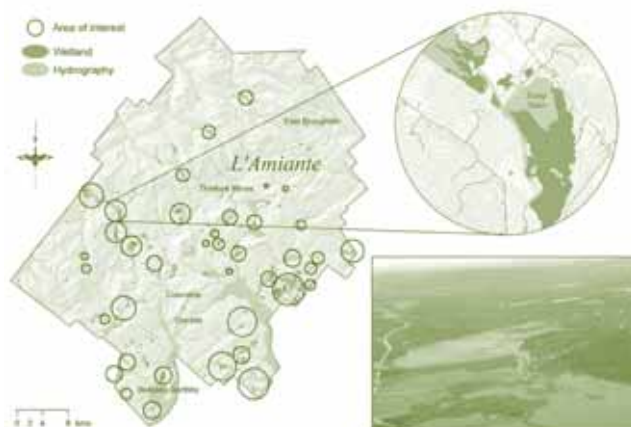
Over the last year, we have taken this process further. In response to a request for assistance from a private forest development agency, the Agence de mise en valeur de la forêt privée de Chaudière, a tool to assist in decision-making was developed for the Regional Municipality County (RMC) of Amiante, in the administrative region of Chaudière-Appalaches.

The tool uses the value criteria assigned in the framework of the Boisbriand exercise and existing geographic data, which enable systematic processing of the data for the territory concerned. Using a computer and geographic information systems (GIS), a

spatial analysis model was developed to determine the importance of the wetlands in the Amiante RMC based on their value in terms of ecological resources (habitat quality, species of flora and fauna present, etc.). A second analysis model was developed to calculate the degradation pressure to which these wetlands were exposed. Combining the two models makes it possible to find out which wetlands in the RCM should be given priority. For example, the Étang Slater, a wetlands complex made up of open water, marshes and swamps, was identified as a primary site for wetland conservation in the Amiante RMC.

A quick flight was made over the territory to photograph and check the quality of these lands to obtain a more "concrete" picture of the sites. All the information was assembled in an attractive and powerful document for the Amiante RMC to use as a tool for making decisions regarding wetlands conservation. Thanks to this tool, work can proceed more quickly and efficiently than before, and over a much broader territory.

The results were presented to the authorities of the Amiante RMC and were most favourably received. This was teamwork! DUC's role now is to guide the RMC in wetlands conservation, one of the components of the RMC's water management mandate.



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# Newfoundland and Labrador's new fundraising manager: Kelly Sandoval

Aside from the obvious goals of raising funds, increasing volunteer numbers, and growing the number of DUC banquets within the province, Kelly Sandoval wants to increase volunteers' recognition and appreciation for the role that they play in DUC on Newfoundland and Labrador.

As their new fundraising manager, Sandoval believes that recognizing the volunteers' hard work will go a long way because they will feel proud of being part of something very big and very valuable – the eider initiative.

With new eider initiative plans poised to begin, Sandoval says it couldn't be a better time to become a DUC volunteer. She says she is looking forward to ensuring that the

volunteers receive increased communications about the great job they are doing and how their efforts are ensuring the future of the precious eider ducks.

"Historically, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are extremely generous people," she says. "If we can express in words how this project will affect future generations, then the people will continue to support

our efforts. All in all, I am very excited about the coming year and what it holds for us here on the island."

Kelly Sandoval and hubby Greg  
out kayaking and exploring the  
caves along Cape Broyle,  
Newfoundland and Labrador.



## Improving wildlife habitat and enhancing livestock watering conditions

Ducks Unlimited Canada partnered with provincial agricultural departments, private landowners, agri conservation clubs, other soil and crop associations, as well as wildlife agencies, to work towards practices that benefit wetlands and wildlife – the alternate watering system. There is more than one Sustainable Agriculture Practice that Benefits Wetlands and Wildlife –the alternate watering system.

The program has focused on the diked pastures found in southeastern New Brunswick, specifically the Tantramar, Memramcook, Pettitcodiac and Shepody rivers and tributaries. With 25

systems in place, the shining, spinning windmill water pumps are becoming a common sight on this expansive, flat landscape surrounding the Upper Bay of Fundy.

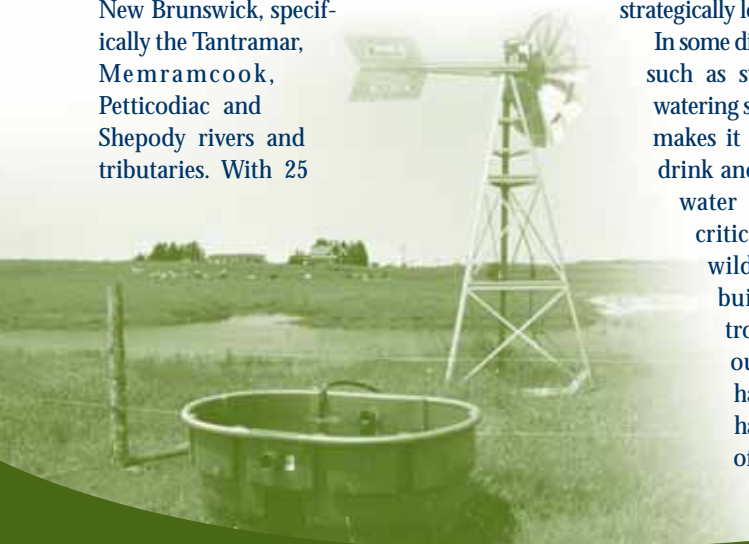
Every farming operation and pasture requires a customized approach. A typical approach is a watering system that involves building a fence to exclude livestock from a watercourse that flows through a pasture. Using wind action via a windmill system, water is pumped from the fenced stream directly into one or more watering troughs strategically located inside the pasture.

In some difficult-to-fence situations, such as steep slopes, building a watering system within the pasture makes it easy for the animals to drink and keeps them out of the water course protecting the critical habitat essential to wildlife. Shade structures built near the drinking trough also keep animals out of fragile streams and habitat where they would have otherwise gone to cool off on a hot summer day.

Where a large, fenced pond is used as a backup water source for livestock, when properly constructed, this pasture pond can double as productive wildlife habitat. If wind power is not feasible to transport water, then hardened, controlled access ramps can allow livestock to drink from a specific section of the pond without wading into the water source. Livestock that are permitted to walk into a water source will eventually destroy it.

Animals require good quality drinking water to ensure their health and to ensure a healthy environment. Simply fencing them away from the water source and using alternate methods of water supply not only improves the quality of their drinking water but also improves habitat conditions for waterfowl and wildlife.

**Producers interested in alternate watering systems can contact the DUC office in Amherst 902-667-8726 or the nearest Provincial agriculture office to discuss the positive benefits for their livestock, their industry and the health of the environment.**



## Whitaker Marsh Donated to DUC

On Dec. 2, 2003, Bernie MacDonald, Keith Pigot and Ross Pigot, three hunting companions and longtime DUC supporters, donated 68 acres of high-quality tidal marsh to DUC. This critical habitat for black ducks, great blue herons and nesting willets, known on P.E.I. as Whitaker's Marsh, is located along Johnston's River, which is part of the Canadian Heritage River system.

According to Keith Pigot, the trio decided to give the land to DUC because:

1. Giving to DUC, a perfect steward of land, would ensure their intent that this property be preserved for wildlife habitat.
2. This would avoid fractured ownership that may occur during estate planning.
3. They could take advantage of immediate tax savings through the land donation process.

In future, P.E.I.'s habitat technician Wade Lewis says that land donations to DUC along with purchases, conservation agreements and wetland protection policies will ensure the continuation of critical habitat for wildlife. If you are interested in discussing the benefits of land donations to DUC, contact the nearest DUC office.

## Operation Dragonfly

For the third year running, the Opération Libellule (Operation Dragonfly) volunteer committee was active. This year's survey ran from May 31 to June 15, 2003, and the volunteers surveyed the avifauna of 12 different Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) project sites. In total, the participants returned 42 observation sheets, half of which were used at Cap Tourmente, where five sites are located. Each group of volunteers had a bird, amphibian and mammal observation sheet. No plant sheet was filled out this year.

Of course, none of this could have been done without the outstanding work of the co-ordinating committee, whose members spend hours organizing meetings and exchanging e-mails, not to mention handling all the clerical work involved. The 2003 committee consisted of the following individuals: Chantal Leblanc, Marie-Claude Martin, Serge Côté, Mireille Gaudreau and Jean-François Dumont. Claudie Lessard of DUC acted as a technical resource person and DUC volunteer co-ordinator Jocelyn Landry rounded out the committee.

We would also like to acknowledge nearly 30 volunteers who participated in the surveys: Stéphanie Tremblay, Jacques Dumas, Valérie Barde, Loïc Le Noc, Stéphane Leclerc, Hélène Rhéaume, Renaud Poulin, Jacques Larouche, Pierre-Luc Bégin Larouche, Jean-Guy Chouinard, Joanne Dussault, Émilie D. Chouinard, Iris D. Chouinard, Jean Chateauvert, Christine Lessard, Sébastien Lefort, Mathieu Feret, Grégory Bourguelat, Chantale Bolduc, Jimmy Simard, Daniel Guay, Karol-Ann Fortier Guay,

Marie-Pierre Desrosiers, Julie Pettigrew, Pierre Pettigrew, Martin Lévesque, Denise Lajoie, Estelle Nadeau and Pierre Brassard, and friends who joined them.

Opération Libellule is one part of the DUC member volunteer program in Quebec, which encompasses volunteer activities in a variety of spheres helping to advance the DUC conservation initiatives.

A fairly broad variety of bird species was observed on the DUC sites. Out of the 12 sites visited, the ducks most frequently observed were the green-winged teal, American black duck, mallard, northern pintail, blue-winged teal, northern shoveler and gadwall. The pied-billed grebe, American bittern and black-crowned night heron were the other aquatic species regularly reported. Among the non-aquatic birds, the species commonly sighted were the eastern kingbird, tree swallow, red-winged blackbird, American crow, American robin, cedar waxwing, common grackle and yellow warbler. A total of 4,454 individuals representing 114 species were counted. There were some special sightings, including a ruff, a great egret, an albino yellow-rumped warbler and a red-shouldered hawk.

The volunteers loved the experience, as shown by the following testimonials:

• **Stéphane Leclerc:**

"It's always pleasant to visit the site at this time of year. Think of me again next year."

• **Daniel Guay and Karol-Ann Fortier Guay:**

"We're very proud to take part in this survey. We had a magnificent afternoon."

• **The Chouinard Family:** "We enjoyed the experience very much."

In short, Opération Libellule again ran well this year. As you can see, the volunteers like to take part in this activity and are often eager for next year to come so they can start all over. What's more, in at least two cases, the survey has become a family affair!

In closing, DUC would like to thank the volunteer committee for its role in making Opération Libellule run smoothly. Additional thanks go out to everyone who participated in this activity.

We look forward to seeing you at the next edition of Opération Libellule.



# DUC's dinner fundraising in good hands in New Brunswick

Gagetown committee volunteer Luke Cain's new idea may revolutionize DUC volunteers' fundraising quest in New Brunswick. An avid waterfowler, Cain learned that a major portion of the funds he raises for DUC dinners goes into conservation and this motivates him to give back to the resource that he has enjoyed for many years.

As a business leader, Cain is no stranger to sales and to hard work. He was the 2002 sealed bid auction top producer in Canada and for the past nine months he has been an active member of the provincial volunteer council. In this capacity, Cain learned much more about the good work of DUC and by asking questions, he discovered a hole in the DUC dinner fundraising system.

His desire to raise funds for the Gagetown dinner led him to realize the need for sales tools and his aim to assist other volunteers on his committee inspired him to think about a new way of soliciting dinner donations. As an entrepreneur, Cain is experienced in sales but he realized that many volunteers have difficulty asking local businesses for financial assistance. Cain realized that the lack of sales materials may be a missed up-selling opportunity.

The donor might give not only a gift from the business as usual, but also an additional cash donation if the volunteer made a request that was supported by an incentive. Thus, Cain's idea of a "DUC Dinner Partner Program" was born.

The shy volunteer can give the DUC Dinner Partner Program sales tool to the contributor. The contributor has the opportunity to think about the cash donation and make a comfortable choice. Cain says the sales tool presented to the contributor "takes the guesswork out of it". The contributor makes the decision and the volunteer is not apprehensive about making the "ask".

Cain sees the DUC Dinner Partner Program as a work in progress over the long term. He is very excited about the startup of the program and is looking forward to receiving feedback from the volunteers. He knows this program can only be successful with the volunteers' commitment and hard work. The DUC Dinner Partner Program sales tool will be available by May 1, 2004. Contact your fundraising manager for details.

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