



The Industrious Beaver – Canada’s national symbol

To the operators of Nova Scotia’s Trans Canada Trail, the engineering beaver can be an expensive and determined nuisance.

Trail operators had a serious problem: Canada’s national symbol was damming watercourses alongside abandoned rail lines that make up the nature trails. In some places, they forced water levels to rise 20 and 30 feet, washing out sections of the carefully constructed trail, creating extra expense and a serious morale problem for the volunteers who helped develop the trail.

Thus, trail operators were caught betwixt and between: how to deal with the results of the beaver’s work, without hurting these little creatures. To solve the problem, they searched for experience and expertise.

They found it at DUC in Amherst. As DUC habitat biologist John Wile puts it: “Over the years DUC Atlantic Canada has gained a lot of experience learning to live with beavers.”

Working with a \$50,000 budget (\$35,000 from the federal government’s Eco Action program), DUC staff zeroed in on a 126-kilometre stretch of the Trans Canada Trail along the Northumberland coastal plain in the northern part of Nova Scotia. DUC staff worked with summer students to construct and install 15 beaver-proof culverts and identified 21

additional sites where remedial work is required.

The end result: happy trail walkers and contented beavers. It is what the Trans Canada Trail co-ordinator Steve Vines describes as: “A perfect fit and good experience. It is a great partnership. DUC took on the project and ran with it.”



Rob Fraser is the habitat technician/specialist for the NS and southern NB region. He has been working with DUC for more than 20 years.

P.E.I. fundraising in full swing

The new P.E.I. volunteer fundraising efforts are in full swing. The Borden-Carleton Special Events Committee has had tremendous success with its shooting and fishing events. The next fishing derby is May 2004. Plans for the Mount Stewart Committee and the Provincial Waterfowlers’ Committee are all coming along nicely. For the New London Committee, the numbers were doubled and eight Adopt-A-Class pledges were made, to date, the highest number received on the Island.



(l-r): Darren Hasson (FM), Wayne Haslam (Silent Bid Winner) and Dale Johnston (Committee Chair)

P.E.I.’s wetland policy at work

In the case of “A Wetland Conservation Policy for Prince Edward Island” early indications from DUC’s Tom Duffy and P.E.I.’s wildlife biologist Randy Dibblee show an enthusiastic endorsement of the document and its application.

Since the policy came into effect, Duffy has worked with Dibblee on two privately owned sites where development caused a net loss of wetland. In each case, without resistance, the development proponent financed plans for compensatory creation of new wetland.

Duffy says: “These test cases prove the policy works...before the policy went into effect we simply would have lost two wetlands.”

Other cases involved the government’s own Transportation and Public Works Department.

“The policy was really successful in preventing loss of wetland,” enthuses Duffy. “The highways department was doing a project that would alter some wetland. They had us look at the sites and point out a few things. The supervisors changed their plans and the wetland was preserved. That’s the way it should be – no damage, no cost. In P.E.I., the lesson is simple – it’s more expensive to destroy a wetland than it is to preserve it.”

