

Current News



Issue 14 • Summer 2015



Our Watershed - Our Bay - Our Heritage - Our Future

The Shediac Bay Watershed Association is now in its 16th year. The vision that guided the initial association remains as true today as it did in 1999 “a healthy ecosystem that will sustain the quality of water for future generations”.

Environmental planning requires physical, chemical and biological indicators that offer a measure of the health of Shediac Bay and its watershed. This newsletter provides insight on how a combination of education and community stewardship is supporting our planning.

As in past years, our program is very much guided by contributions and grants. Throughout the years, the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund has been the cornerstone of our program, so we welcome an even stronger partnership with the ETF this year. We also welcome projects sponsored by Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the NB Wildlife Trust Fund, the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund, and federal and provincial student programs, as well as support from the Town of Shediac and our Local Service Districts, our schools, and private companies and individuals.

I encourage you to glance through this newsletter to appreciate our wide variety of projects. Our manager, Remi Donelle, our field technician Jolyne Hebert, our science advisor Jim Weldon, our administrator Helen Hall, and several students are working diligently on our program with the help of partners, volunteers and our Board of Directors. Feel free to speak with them at our office, or on Sunday at our booth in Shediac’s “Market in the Park”.

Our recent Annual General Meeting saw a number of Directors reappointed and a few new ones added, along with ex-officio Directors representing the Town of Shediac and Local Service Districts. We welcome anyone that shares our vision to join us on the 2nd Thursday of every month, September through June, at 7 PM at the Pointe du Chêne community centre.

What we have learned from our first 15 years is that cooperation and partnerships, combined with persistence and hard work, pay off. It is one thing to complain about a problem, it is another to provide leadership and vision to work towards a solution. So join us. Be part of the solution.

David Dunn - President
Shediac Bay Watershed Association

Summer Seminar



The SBWA, in partnership with Homarus Eco-Center, is offering presentations and educational activities throughout the summer at the Pointe-du-Chêne wharf.

There are exhibits and aquariums full of aquatic life that are wonderful for the whole family!

Tree Planting

Another project is to plant 550 trees and shrubs. We have partnered with to provide trees and shrubs for their green space.



We have planted trees and shrubs in MFB School’s educational garden, Centennial Park, the Millennium trail, the dog park and in Webster Park. We also replanted trees alongside the stream passing under Ohio road, which was damage over the last few years due to flooding caused by a beaver dam. A public tree-planting day will be organized during the summer, be on the lookout for advertisement!

This project is funded by Environment Canada’s EcoAction program. Special thanks to the Town of Shediac for their continued support of the trees and bird houses placement planning.

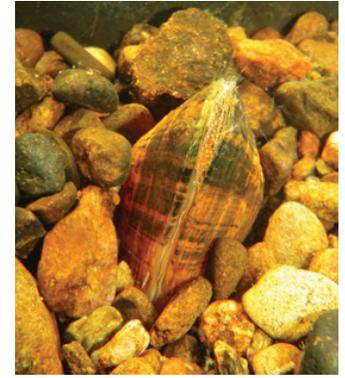
Protecting Species-At-Risk: Freshwater Mussels



Freshwater mussels are an integral part of a river's ecosystem. They provide a filtering service that improves water quality and are important food for some animals. Because their reproductive cycle depends on both healthy habitats and healthy fish populations, they also serve as a good indicator of water quality.



In 2009, the brook floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*) was given the status of "Special Concern" under COSEWIC after the species disappeared from half of its known range in North America. In 2014, the Shediac Bay Watershed Association conducted surveys in the Shediac and Scoudouc Rivers to look for the brook floater, which was once known to occur in our watershed. After



searching 13 known brook floater sites, the mussel was not found. We are continuing to survey our watershed to confirm its presence and, if possible, protect this rare species.

This program is sponsored by the NB Wildlife Trust Fund (NBWTF) and Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP).

Tern Colony Restoration:

A number of years ago, during construction of the Shediac Bay, a barge was filled to create a breakwater for the Shediac Bay Marina. This barge proved to be ideal habitat for the common tern and a colony was subsequently established. However, the barge had to be replaced and last year the tern colony lost its home.

Knowing that there was little if any alternative habitat in our area for the tern colony, the SBWA established an experimental tern platform that successfully demonstrated it could provide a nesting area. Based on this success, this year the platform has been expanded, with more than 100 birds now having adopted it as nesting area. Our counts indicate that there are over 100 eggs among 41 nesting pairs.



The platform is located in the south-east corner of Shediac Bay, and can be easily viewed from the Pointe-du-Chêne walking trail bridge.

This project is supported with funding from the Environmental Damages Fund and the Wildlife Trust Fund. A special thanks goes out to the Shediac Bay Yacht Club for donating docks that were used to build the new platform. Thanks also goes to the Canadian Wildlife Service – Environment Canada for their support.



Bat Houses



This year with support from Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, SBWA is raising awareness for the declining state of our bat populations. Bats in our area have not escaped the continent-wide fungal disease "White-Nose Syndrome". The situation has become urgent enough to seek "Species at Risk Act" protection for three of New Brunswick's seven sub-species of bats. In fact, the once common sub-species "Little brown bat" is thought to be on the verge of extirpation in New Brunswick. Installing a bat house might not necessarily help directly, but it can't hurt, so at a seminar co-sponsored by the NB Museum, SBWA offered bat houses to participants.



Once again this year the SBWA, in partnership with the Town of Shediac and Point du Chene Service District, organized a beach clean-up day on June 6th, to celebrate World's Oceans day. It was a cold rainy day, but many volunteers braved the weather to pick up trash along our coastline. This day is a great reminder that we must all do our part in picking up litter in our environment, and we don't need a special day to do it!

Many of our volunteers joined us after the beach sweep for a BBQ sponsored by the Shediac Co-op.



Invasive Species: European Green Crab

Green crab is native to Europe and North Africa. It is thought to have been transported to the central coast of North America in the 1800's in the ballast of sailing ships. By the 1950's it migrated north to the Bay of Fundy, and have now been found in Shediac Bay.

The green crab is an extremely dangerous invader. As the population grows, it can demolish shellfish stocks, attack aquaculture farms, and destroy eel grass beds which provide an essential spawning and nursing area to many native fish species.

The SBWA is keeping a close watch on this species. In 2013, with the help of the Shell Canada Environmental Fund, SBWA initiated a uniquely designed exploratory fishery using specially made traps. Our research observed an increase in numbers of green crab during the peak of summer months in 2014. We are continuing to monitor the population and looking for a control and mitigation programs.



Fish Habitat Restoration

The SBWA has three initiatives to restore and maintain habitat for our resident fish populations, particularly trout and salmon:

1. EROSION AND RUN OFF:

Wood and rock riprap walls are being erected and vegetation is being planted to control erosion. Our objective is to hold soil in place, maintain water temperatures, and control run off following extreme rainfall events.



2. DEBRIS AND BEAVER DAM REMOVAL:

Barriers to fish passage are being removed to increase spawning habitat and control water temperature.



3. CULVERT MAINTENANCE:

The SBWA is also monitoring culverts to ensure that fish can pass through. This year, the SBWA is working with NB Department of Transportation culvert in Scotch Settlement to establish a fish ladder where a culvert is "hanging" and fish passage is disrupted.

We would like to thank the following funding programs for their assistance: Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (DFO-RFCPP), the NB Wildlife Trust Fund (NBWTF) and the NB Environmental Trust Fund (NBETF). We would also like to thank the Department of Transportation for their assistance in the fish ladder project.

Fish Stock Monitoring

Fish population surveys are an important part of our monitoring program. One method that we use is electrofishing, a process whereby electricity is used to temporarily immobilize fish. This process allows us to identify, measure, weigh, and release the fish. This data is then used to measure the benefits of our restoration initiatives.



Aquatic Monitoring

The SBWA is in our 10th year of a partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to monitor fish in the Bay. Our staff and volunteers sample the same 12 locations around the mouth of the estuaries of the Scoudouc and Shediac rivers, to measure any significant changes in aquatic life. Using the contents from a 30-meter fishnet as a barometer for identifying changes in our local ecology, we are able to identify and investigate ecological changes as they occur.

Bird Houses

Anyone who's looking around the parks in our community this year will see an abundant supply of new bird houses. We installed 60 birdhouses designed for four species: black-capped chickadees, tree swallows, American robins and wood ducks. SBWA worked with 4th grade students at MFB elementary school to build the houses. Students signed their names under their boxes they built so they can visit it, and hopefully observe birds using it.



This project is funded by Environment Canada's EcoAction program. Special thanks to Nature NB's Lewnanny Richardson for his immense contribution to the success of the project.



Contact Info

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For more information and pictures, please visit our website at

www.shediacbawatershed.com



www.facebook.com/shediacbawatershedassociation

Current News

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Fish Friends

In March 2015, the SBWA set up a 60 gallon fish tank in a 3rd grade class at MFB School, containing approximately 250 trout eggs. As the trout grew over the following months, the kids received multiple presentation on salmon life cycles, migration, habitat requirements, and much more! Before the end of the School year, we organized a field trip to release the trout in the Scoudouc River. In addition to releasing the fish they've grown to love, they also received a demonstration of a benthic macroinvertebrate sampling and got to see live freshwater mussels. It was a fun activity even for the teachers and volunteering parents. The teachers are looking forward to participating in the program again next year.

Water Quality Monitoring

The SBWA has been monitoring freshwater quality in the rivers for many years. This year, we expanded our sampling to the salt-water areas in and around Shediac Bay. Our monitoring program helps us to better respond to environmental threats to the health and safety of aquatic life, and to those people that depend on the bay for recreation, commercial fisheries, and aquaculture.



Sunday in the Park

Our staff are present every Sunday during the summer at the Shediac Market to talk about our project activities to the local people of Shediac and to tourists. We have displays and educational pamphlets to assist us in distributing our information.

We have great things to report on, come visit us!



Membership

Yes, I want to help protect the Shediac Bay and rivers!

Mail to: Shediac Bay Watershed Association
612D Main St., Shediac, NB, E4P 2H3

Donation

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town/City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Method Of Payment: Cheque Cash Money Order

I would like to make a contribution of: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$200 Other