



Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps

People and Nature. Working.

NSYCC — MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps began in 1989 as a vision for getting youth involved with their communities and local environmental issues. Youth are the future, but more importantly *Youth Are Now*. The NSYCC strives to give Nova Scotia youth (aged 17-24) hands-on experience in environmental issues, which will increase their understanding of local and global environmental issues. Working in a team with Community Partners, the NSYCC has over 40 youth working across the province on projects falling under 4 primary groups: waste and resource management, environmental education, watershed management and air quality. These projects, along with the Environmental Leadership Projects are providing Nova Scotia youth with the skills to be effective and educated environmental stewards and well-rounded members of their communities. Please take the time to read through this newsletter and learn a little more about our projects and organization.

COMPOSTING WHAT?

It's been an interesting summer full of learning experiences for the ELP team in Antigonish. We've tried many things for the first time, including stone masonry and throwing bails of hay, and we think we may have developed some new muscles! The process of building our composting toilet has been full of challenges, but with the help of the community we have constructed something for which we share a great deal of pride and, if applicable to outhouses, affection. Another highlight of our Composting Education Project was a workshop we held at the Coady International Institute with participants from countries such as Botswana, India, Ecuador, Canada, Costa Rica and Kenya. In this workshop, we discussed different composting techniques from around the world. It's been a fabulous summer, and thanks to all those who've helped us along the way! Betsy MacDonald, Jazmine Acuna and Zianny Castillo, ELP Antigonish



ELP Antigonish Building a Composting Toilet on an Organic Farm!

UNDER PRESSURE

Have you checked your pressure lately, tire pressure that is? The Sydney crew, in co-operation with the Atlantic Coastal Action Program has. Every Friday this summer we held tire pressure clinics throughout the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. In total half of the cars we checked had at least one tire more than 5% under inflated. If all participants fix this problem then 146.5% in fuel savings could be attained. Amidst tire pressure clinics in August, we also planned two kids' fun days here at ACAP. We helped the kids make crafts from recycled materials. Birdfeeders made from 2 liter bottles, popsicle stick frames and paper towel roll rainmakers were a big hit. We also had environmental games to test their knowledge on composting, recycling and conserving water. Moby S. Loop the Recycling robot and popcorn were the icing on the cake. Good times were had by all.

Crystal Moules & Ian Burrows, ACAP Cape Breton, Air Quality Assessment Crew

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

THIS COULD BE YOU!



So how about it? Rainforests, rice and beans, beaches, sun... not to mention the opportunity to work on environmental and community projects with a Costa Rican counterpart! You could build trails, plant gardens, set up recycling systems in remote areas, all while living in a Costa Rican family and developing leadership skills along with your new-found friends. Then, you get to take your Costa Rican counterpart home and do some NSYCC work together, all while introducing them to life in Nova Scotia.

What are you waiting for? If you're between the ages of 19-24 and you're free next May-August, apply now! (Okay, not now, but soon.)



Maddy and the Garbage Gang Talk Trash in West Hants

TALKIN' TRASH

Here it is the end of what turned out to be a very interesting yet productive summer. We've been really busy the last month, out doing inspections and talking to residents in various communities. We've also made an effort to make it to several day camps, teaching kids about the 3 R's and composting by using fun activities, and a few plays starring our very own, Squirm, the composting worm, as well as the infamous Garbage gang. We recently did an information booth at the Sam Slick days, which seemed to gather a lot of interest. It was nice to get out and talk to people without the fear of us sticking their garbage. We did some random bag audits, and found that some residents have sneaky ways of not disposing their compost properly, like stuffing it in a chip bag perhaps? It's not what we like to see, but it made us realize that not everyone is doing what is required, although at a glance it may seem so. We really hope that all our work has paid off this summer, and that people realize how easy it is to do their part. Until then we will keep talkin' trash.

Sarah Lake and Maddy Curry, Municipality of the District of West Hants, Waste Reduction Crew

BACKYARD COMPOSTING EDUCATION

For the past 3 weeks we have been going door to door selling backyard composters in the town of Port Hawkesbury. We have visited over 900 homes, leaving tips and information on backyard composting as well as delivering and setting up backyard composters for the residents interested in purchasing one. Every Tuesday we have gone around and inspected the blue bags and garbage bags for any recycling violations. In the past 3 weeks we have stickered approximately 50 bags but overall the recycling program seems to be very well received by the town's residents. In the next week we will also have two public presentations, one at a charity barbecue and another at the Granville Green, an outdoor concert series in the town of Port Hawkesbury. Our summer project has gone very well and has been a great learning experience.

Matthew MacMullin and Jennifer Chisholm, Port Hawkesbury, Backyard Composting Education Team

TOWN OF TRENTON

Greetings from Trenton Park!!! Our summer has been flying by! We've spent the last 3 weeks gardening the many flowerbeds at the park and helping out with the recreation kids. Also we've spent countless hours making phone calls all over trying to get our project up and going, while of course meeting a few challenges along the way! We haven't let the challenges keep our spirits down! No Siree Bob! We're still hanging in there cleaning garbage cans and such... and with only two weeks left, there is still so much that can be done! Our project, which is organizing a compost and recycling program for the Town of Trenton's public facilities, has so much potential that we hope people continue working at it after we are done our term here.

Janetta Fraser and Nicole Fraser, Town of Trenton

The NSYCC has 25 projects throughout Nova Scotia this summer!

HITTING THE ROAD IN HRM

Did you know that if every Canadian motorist avoided idling for five minutes a day, collectively, we would save over 2.5 million litres of fuel per year? Now you do, and so do the hundreds of other people we spoke to while visiting gas stations around the HRM throughout the month of August. At the stations we chatted with motorists about active transportation and ways to reduce their fuel consumption. Given the high price of fuel, people were very receptive and eager to listen to what we had to say. We were also able to visit local businesses and the Farmer's Market to talk about transportation issues in the community. Because transportation issues are closely related to the quality of the air we breathe, we participated in a pilot study to implement a regional air quality health index which will hopefully soon be available to the public in the same way that the weather and UV index are today. Finally, we ended our time here at the EAC on an anti-idling campaign. Wallet-sized cards explaining the ill effects of idling were distributed to local environmentally minded organizations. These cards will enable concerned individuals to approach motorists who are idling their engines and encourage them to stop. Anyone interested in obtaining some of these cards can contact the EAC at 429-0924. Although our official term as Transportation Ambassadors is coming to a close we hope that the people we had an opportunity to talk with will be inspired to become ambassadors for sustainable transportation in their own right.

Jillian Reardon, Dianne MacIsaac, Corbett Hancey, Ecology Action Centre, Sustainable Transportation Ambassadors



EARTH NATURE AND YOU

As the summer is coming to a close our project is beginning to wrap up. We feel as though our program it has been a success. Our camp went ahead with the previous planning that we had done. The children seemed to really enjoy our curriculum and were eager to learn about environmental awareness. Parents were confident in our project and had only positive feedback. Overall we see this project as a success. We completed our goals of educating children as well as their families so that they are more aware of the world around us and how it is changing as a result of human action. If there is to be a program such as this one in following years we believe that it would only grow from what we have started.

Jenna Lee Green and Geraldine MacMillian, NSEL in Big Pond



HARVESTING TUSKET RADISHES

We worked for the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps through the Tusk River Environmental Protection Association. Over the course of the summer we worked on several projects. One of our main focuses for TREPA was a radish growing experiment, using effective microorganisms. Along with this experiment we also set up two compost bins and the two community gardens. We would spray one with Effective Microorganisms and the other with just water and compare the differences. Unfortunately the composting process does take some time; therefore we will not be able to see the results of this experiment. However some of the TREPA members have agreed to continue with it throughout the fall and winter. Another focus for the summer was a home composting experiment, using the Bokashi system. Eight members from the community agreed to take home the Bokashi buckets and help us with the projects. Aside from doing experiments with environmental relevance, we also created pamphlets for various age groups. We created one for younger children, youth, teens, and adults. We sent the pamphlets to RRFB in hope that that they will distribute them for us. Finally we created a bibliography of both texts, and online resources on composting at the Yarmouth library. This will be made available at both the library, and as well on the TREPA website. The summer was very enjoyable, as well as very educational. Working with TREPA and the NSYCC has given us a greater interest in environmental issues.

Matthew Gillis and Brandon Smith, Tusk River Environmental Protection Association

ADVENTURES OF THE BRIDGEWATER CREW

It turned into a bio-blitz!
The second annual Bio Blitz took place in the Lake Rossignol Wilderness area from July 26-29. We helped to set up base camp and acted as field assistants to the 28 Biologists and enthusiasts from across the province who took part. The information gathered from studying turtles, snakes, fish, lichens, squirrels, birds, and vegetation all paints a more clear picture of what is present in the protected area. We're lichen it! August saw us team up with lichenologist Tom Neely, and fellow NSYCC Christopher Taylor to visit 15 lichen plots and establish 3 new ones across western NS. Lichens are indicators of air quality, and can be used to map air-sheds and monitor changes. Jeremy also successfully identified the endangered boreal felt lichen on a trip to the Eastern Shore. Wet wrap-up... We finished our wild summer on the water once more - this time assisting with lake and stream studies and helping out with the 'loon watch' program with the staff at the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute.

Sarah MacPhee and Jeremy Peck, NSEL Bridgewater Crew

WHAT A RESOURCE!

I have had a busy summer working on water monitoring programs for the department of environment and labour. I helped install four new groundwater observation wells which record the depth of the water table. I also helped verify almost all of the wells by manually measuring the water table depth. Once verified I would put the data into a spreadsheet and create graphs showing the water levels for 2006 as well as the historical levels. This summer, I also worked on surface water monitoring through hydrolabs. A hydrolab is a device inserted into a river which records pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and temperature of the water. I helped install pipe work for a new hydrolab in St. Mary's River. I also upgraded a hydrolab in the Shelburne river. As well, I verified the data recorded by two existing hydrolabs to insure they were working correctly. Although I've learned a lot this summer, perhaps the most important thing I learned is how it is extremely important that we understand everything we can about the quality and quantity of water we have here in Nova Scotia, because water is such an essential resource we all need.

Jeff Hilchey, NSEL Water Monitoring Program Assistant

RAISING AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

Air Quality & Climate change issues are *still* as urgent as they are complex. Our site visits during the past month have only strengthened our concern for spreading the word about Air Quality and Climate change to the public. During these visits to Rainbow Haven Provincial Park and The Halifax Regional Library we have had many interesting and informative conversations with misinformed and informed members of the public alike. There is a lot of work to be done if we are to ensure that the public has the information they need to make the right choices when dealing with issues such as anti-idling. Our major accomplishment over the summer, a three panel presentation on Air Quality awareness in Nova Scotia, is only a beginning. Hopefully the presentation can be used by the NSYCC and the Department of Environment and Labour to help further inform the Nova Scotians.

Alex Longmire and Brandon Silver, NSEL Air Quality Crew



POOR AIR QUALITY AFFECTS US ALL

Well, it's getting to be that time of year again when you ask yourself, where did the summer go? Julie Cameron and Raya Izzard, the Air Quality Team at Clean Nova Scotia, know exactly where their summer went. They have been busy attending events, completing surveys and handing out educational brochures on air quality. To date, their public venues have included both the Halifax and Dartmouth ferry terminals, Halifax Farmer's Market, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Feed Nova Scotia Health Fair, two soccer tournaments, an under 13 Peewee Regatta and the Canadian Ultimate Frisbee Championships. The Dartmouth ferry terminal was their most successful venue, as they were able to completed close to thirty surveys in three hours. At the Ferry Terminal the general public seemed more willing to talk, because they were not rushing to get anywhere (i.e., waiting for the ferry). The team have successfully completed over two hundred and fifty surveys and participated in many interesting and informative conversations with an even larger number of people. They were interviewed by CTV Live at Five reporter Tracy Prysiazniuk about air quality concerns of the public. The Air Quality Team has also been developing an air quality PowerPoint presentation for CNS, an Airshed annotated bibliography, a presentation and activity for the Lung Association asthma camp, and an educational air quality campaign for high school students. Overall, Julie and Raya have learned an immense amount of information about air quality, and experienced a summer they will never forget!

Julie Cameron and Raya Izzard, Clean Nova Scotia, Air Quality Crew

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE!

Here at the Natural Resources Education Centre we have been very busy. Our last day camp ended on the 11th of August and all three of the camps were really fun for all the kids and all of us leaders too. With even more dissections, exciting overnight adventures, games and activities, pond adventures and a lot of deer flies our summer camps were fun for all. One really exciting thing that we got to do was fly in a helicopter. Brian Gilbert, the Executive Director of Regional Services, made it possible for myself and the two other summer students that work at the Centre to fly around and take picture of the two woodlots that the Centre owns. We were going to see if we could see the boundary lines of the woodlots and make sure that they were still there after Hurricane Juan. The trip was a great success and now we know that the lines are still there and don't need much work!

Kilah Ashley, Natural Resources Education Centre

TALKING THE TOX IN COLE HARBOUR

The summer is nearly through and the Tox-Free Household Hazardous Waste Education Program is in full gear. Thus far, we have knocked on approximately 1100 doors in Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour, and have completed approximately 134 surveys, and 15 follow-up surveys. We have also done presentations at the Halifax Farmer's Market and at the Feed Nova Scotia Health Fair at the Eastern Sun Professional Centre, where we handed out nearly 50 information booklets and spoke to many interested people. We have had interviews in the Daily News and on 95.7 CJNI (News Radio). We were also interviewed for the Chronicle Herald (the article appeared on the cover of the Living section, Saturday August 19th). Subsequently, we've had 11 requests for information packs. This is the first time Tox-Free has ever had requests for information and it is the most media attention the program has ever gotten! Although final results are not yet available (using sink, tub and tile cleaner as an example): 85% of those surveyed use conventional commercial cleaners, 4.9% use alternative commercial cleaners like Down East or Nature Clean, and 9% use household supplies like vinegar, baking soda, or borax. Also, 53% of those who participated in the follow-up survey reported a behavioural change following our visit. Of the 47% (7 participants) who reported no change, 3 participants reported already using alternatives. Ninety-three percent of participants have said that they will stay committed to reducing their household toxins and practising proper disposal of household hazardous waste.

Matthew MacDonald and Rebecca Rahey, Clean Nova Scotia Tox Free Crew



DON'T FORGET TO COMPOST! YOU COULD GET A VISIT FROM ... COMPOST MAN!

BACKYARD COMPOSTING

For the second part of our project we have been responsible for the door-to-door sale of composters. This involves us going out into different communities to sell the composters. If we are successful in the sale of a composter then we would set it up in the required location and answer any questions the new owner might have. The composters are sold at a subsidized ate of \$25.00. A receipt is written up for each composter sold. At the end of the day we are responsible for bringing all of our receipts to the tax office, where they make us a receipt for the sales on that day. We also answer questions for the individuals who already have a composter. If any of our valued customers have a problem with their existing composter such as too wet, too dry we help them stir the compost and fix the problem.

Rory MacDonald and Hillary Graham, Port Hood Backyard Composting Crew

GEORGE'S RIVER

The latter half of our summer employment experience with NSYCC was comprised predominantly of continuing our restoration work on George's River. It took two full days to remove a monstrous beaver dam that was disrupting the flow of the river, and preventing fish from moving upstream. Along with the removal of a few smaller obstructions the river now flows freely for spawning trout and salmon in the fall. In addition we planted hundreds of trees to restore bank integrity and prevent erosion. The highlight of our summer was when we discovered an ancient bridge deep in the woods. In addition to our main project, we also got to do some estuary sampling in Port Morien, Mira River, and Big Glace Bay. We participated in environmental awareness outreach in the community at various events. We also furthered our background on digger logs by monitoring former sites where they were installed.

All in all it was a fun summer and a great learning experience for all of us.

Terri MacPherson, Dane Thompson, Ashley Drohan, ACAP Cape Breton, George's River Crew

CHECK OUT OUR SITE TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED!

www.gov.ns.ca/enla/youth

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THE CHESTER CREW

This summer we have managed to make great progress on all of our projects: event greening, garbage garage, interpretive trail, re-use center and the development of educational tools for our community. We participated in 5 events around Chester, providing the organizers with waste stations –compost, garbage and recycling- and we also gave advice to both the public and event staff on how to properly sort their waste. The conceptual plan for the Garbage Garage was completed – building design, hours of operation and costs were decided- and classroom games and crafts were created. This project will be able to be up and running by late spring 2007. Our interpretive trail at the Kaizer Meadow Landfill has been marked and a brochure was made that includes information on the points of interest that will appear along the path. A map was formatted and a budget was laid out so that next spring the actual construction of the trail will be able to begin. The re-use center now has a building plan and will be located at the Landfill with the Garbage Garage. A survey was sent out to community groups concerning their interest in such a facility. We hope that there will be a positive reply. The educational tools that were completed are the following: a reducing solid waste brochure, an activity book for children that teaches about environmental issues such as energy conservation, pollution free nature and the reduction of waste and games that encourage children to act responsibly when it comes to solid waste. We feel our summer projects have developed nicely and that our community will profit from our efforts.

Catherine Cone, Jehad Assaff, Cody Hebb and Adam McDow, Municipality of the District of Chester

DAM INVENTORY SUCCESS

I've become very familiar with rural Nova Scotia over the past weeks. The dam inventory began in Kings county and took me to various lakes and rivers across Lunenburg, Queens, Colchester and Cumberland counties. I've spent a great deal of time visiting hydroelectric dams on escorted tours. On other days I venture out on my own to find dams. During my time here at the Department of Environment and Labour the database has grown by 56 dams, and it's still not close to being finished.

Katherine Gallant, NSEL Water and Wastewater Dam Inventory Assistant

OH! WHERE HAS MYCELIA GONE

I've spent the last two weeks helping two other NSYCC crew workers, (Sara Macphee, Jeremy Peck), and a consultant for the Dept. of Environment and Labour set up, and retake measurements from, lichen air monitoring plots in Western Nova Scotia. Retaking the measurements is to allow DEL to determine how long the plots can be left between visits while retaining the ability to catch a change in lichen density before it reaches 10%. They will look at the change in the lichen data from last year's observations and use statistical methods to determine the correct interval between visits.

Christopher Taylor, NSEL Protected Areas Lichen Crew

RIVER DENYS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Our project is located in River Denys, Cape Breton and our crew has been busy working on many streams and brooks located in this small community. For the first few weeks of July we visited MacIntyre brook, analyzed work done in previous years, took out major blockages in the flow of the stream, and made small repairs to the digger logs put in by other NSYCC crews years prior. Later in the month, we were accompanied by a partner from the Adopt-a-stream program & the Salmon Association, Amy Weston, who visited MacLennan brook with us. We measured the brook for potential digger logs that our crew will be putting in during the month of August to create pools to uphold and increase the fish population in the stream. Our goal is to achieve a successful and environmentally beneficial outcome with the addition of the digger logs being placed in MacLennan brook. Overall, the month of July has been exciting and educating simultaneously! To begin August, we finished up surveying MacLellan Brook. We were accompanied by Amy Weston from Salmon Association, and she taught us how to properly survey a brook. The purpose of surveying this particular brook was to find out the best places to install digger logs. That is, to create pools at certain points in the brook that would provide the most benefit to the watershed.

As we reached the second week of August we began electro-fishing in Big Brook. The purpose of this was to observe the wildlife currently living in the brook. We recorded the species, age, weight and length of each fish caught. During this time we also observed stabilization walls being built in Big Brook. For the remainder of the summer we installed digger logs in the designated places in MacLellan Brook. Over time, digger logs can help cut away at the river bed and as a result make pools for fish to spawn.

Jessica MacLean & Travis Ellis, Stewards of the River Denys Watershed Crew

SAFE DRINKING WATER CAMPAIGN

This summer we traveled all around the island looking for community water systems that are not registered. At the beginning it was tough going trying to find these systems because they are not on record. So we scratched our heads a little and came up with innovative ways to let these water systems find us. We went to rural Co-op's to ask people about their water and gave them information, made plans put out flyers in the mail at a later date, and used church bulletins. We did not find as many water systems as we would have liked to, but a group workers at the Sydney branch of Environment and Labour are going to continue on from where we left off. Their plan is to implement the project across Nova Scotia in hopes that everyone can have safe drinking water.

Kelley McVarish and Reece Bearnes, NSEL Sydney Safe Drinking Water Crew

ELP AT THE SIERRA CLUB



We have completed our work project with Sierra Club of/du Canada – Atlantic Canada Chapter. Through out the two months we have both learned many different things. There was some difficulty adjusting to the new ways of working and finding ways for us to benefit most from this experience. However, after all is said and done we both have had positive experiences and learned more then we expected to. We both had different experiences. We have had the chance to be on the news, explore our creative and artistic sides, and learn a great deal about the different environmental issues facing Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Provinces. We also had a chance to interact with the public and talk about Sierra Club. We had our challenges, but we made positive change within our selves and within our communities.

Tyler Colbourne and Jorge Salazar, ELP Sierra Club Crew

ELP AT SACVILLE RIVERS

This summer with the NSYCC-ELP, we have been working with the Sackville Rivers Association (SRA). We installed and maintained digger logs and participated in the counting of salmon passing through a fish-ladder in the river. The work was physically tiring, but very satisfying, as we could actually see our results days later. The SRA team was great to work with, and we both had a great time. Thanks to the NSYCC for the hook-up!

Karen George and Marlon Calderon Brenes